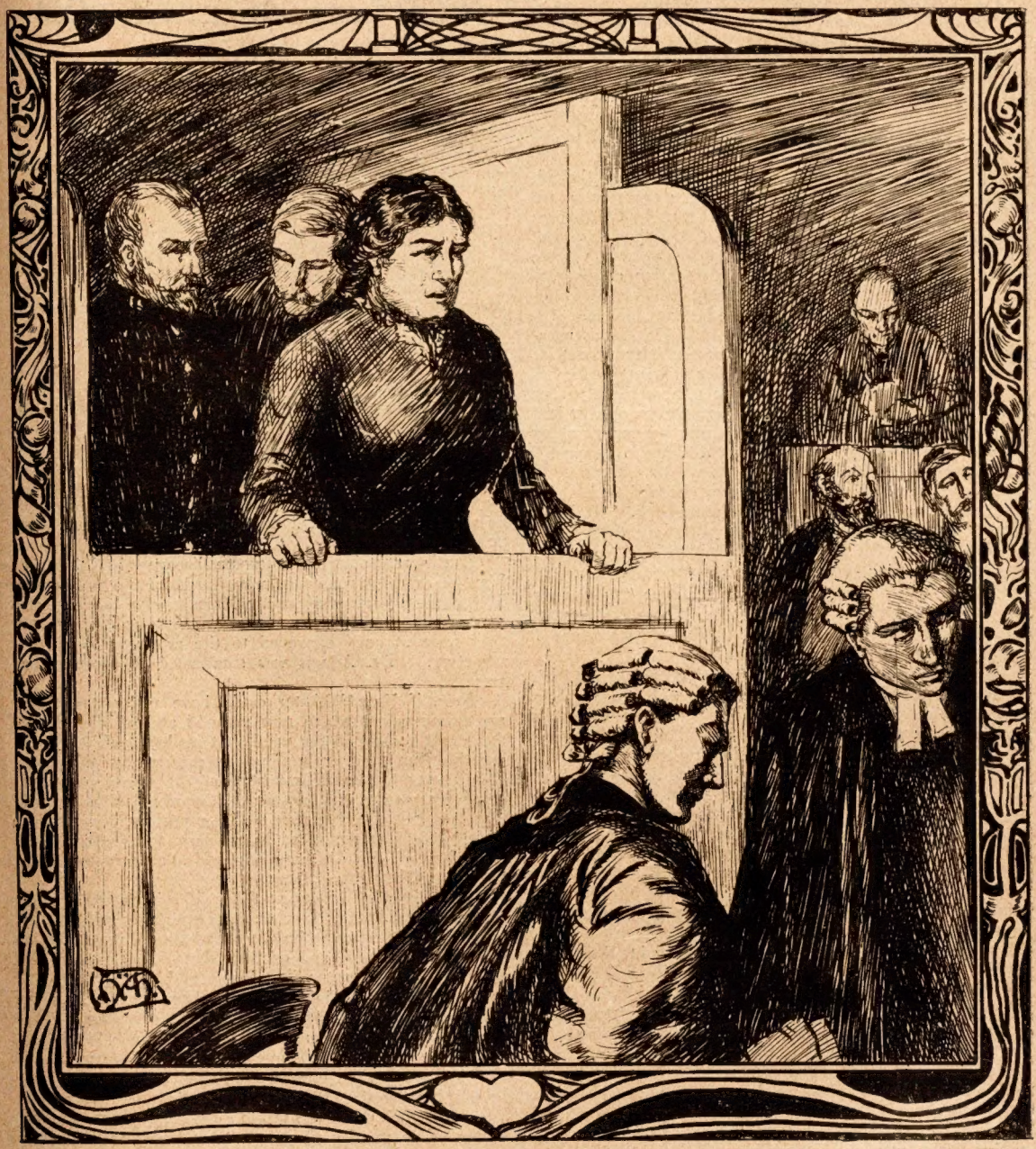
POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY



KATE WEBSTER TRIED FOR THE MURDER OF MRS. THOMAS.

Vol. IV.—No. 43.

"In men we various ruling passions find;
In women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fixed, they first and last obey,
The Love of Pleasure and the Love of Sway."

—POPE, "Moral Essays."

PART II.

IT was eleven o'clock on the night of the 4th of March, 1879, when the ominous splash was heard in the Thames, under the shadow of Richmond Bridge—a splash making but a single sound, but so eloquent a witness that it helped the prosecution a hundred-fold more than did the most important evidence given or the strongest appeal made by counsel for the defence.

The lad Porter, whom Kate Webster had left, was naturally a little uncomfortable in a strange neighbourhood at that time of night, and was glad when his companion rejoined him. He would have made some remark to her about the splash, no doubt, had not the man who had noticed it with him satisfied his curiosity by remarking as they both peered over the bridge, "A barge, I suppose," and passed on.

"Here I am," said Kate, in a very cheerful tone. "I have seen my friend, and given him the box. It is all right."

Young Porter then remarked that it had struck eleven, and that he feared that he would be too late for his train.

"Never mind about that," said Webster; "they know where you are, and will, now it is so late, think you are staying with me. You must come on to Vine Cottages, and I can make you up a bed on the floor."

This was agreed to, and the pair walked quickly to Park Road. The fire was lighted in the front room, and refreshments brought in, Webster seeming to be in unusually high spirits. And no wonder, for it must have taken some weight off her mind to have so uninterruptedly carried out an important part of her arrangements for the removal, as she thought, of the evidence of her guilt. Indeed, Kate was quite merry, and her application to the rum bottle was repeated whilst she entertained her young guest by showing him photographs and books, and gaily conversing until between one and two o'clock in the morning. They both slept in the same room, Webster actually occupying her late mistress's bed, and young Porter sleeping upon one made up on the floor.

After their late hours of the previous night, they were neither of them astir very early in the morning. It was one of those typical March mornings, with the wind sighing softly, then howling weirdly through branches of trees and down the chimney pots, and strange must have seemed the voice-like sounds of warning that came to the ears of that desperate woman as she lay awake inventing her programme for the day as the lad slept serenely on the floor.

Could she but have interpreted those mysterious voices, which now spoke almost distinctly, then died away to well-nigh silence, even the strong nerves of that remarkable woman would have been shaken, and she would have trembled in her bed.

Those strange voices which had swept over the Thames near Barnes would have told her of a startling incident that was occurring could she but have understood their language. They would have whispered of strange happenings as they gently rattled the windows as if tapping for her attention, and then buzzed and shrieked away in the distance as if mad with the guilty woman whose conscience they could not approach.

Those voices would have told her that at that very hour, seven o'clock, on this morning, 5th of March, a man named Henry Wheatley was walking along the towing path near Barnes Terrace. It was just daylight when he espied a square box, corded with clothes-line, floating gently on the top of the tide. There was nobody near at the time, and it being within easy reach of the shore, he hastily landed it, thinking, as a matter of course, that he had secured a prize. Hastily undoing what he anticipated would be a valuable find, he discovered the box to contain several packages in brown paper. It was the work of but an instant for Wheatley to unroll one, when, to his horror and dismay, he saw at a glance that it contained a portion of a human body.

Hastily replacing the gruesome discovery back into the box, he called a passer-by, who hurried for a policeman. The constable, after satisfying himself as to the contents of the parcels, took them to the police-station, whence they were at once conveyed to the mortuary in Barnes cemetery. Dr. Adams was summoned to examine the remains.

Now, if Kate Webster could have understood those mysterious voices which now moaned and whistled round the street corners in the wind that made her skirts flutter and threw up blinding dust into her eyes as she took young Bob Porter to the railway station, she might have had cause for momentary rejoicing. She would have learned that the doctor had examined those parts of the remains which had been recovered in the box, and declared that to the best of his belief they belonged to a young woman of twenty to thirty years of age.

This error of judgment (although, in justice to the medical man, I may mention the important fact that the box did not contain the head) caused the greatest delay in solving the mystery, and enabled Kate Webster to evade the clutches of the law for a time, and, but for her own carelessness, the whole affair might have remained a mystery to the present day. But it was not to be. The avenging hand had been raised. It was but held still for a time that it might strike more surely and more severely.

And now the scene once more changes. We "ring up" on a little more cheerful "act" of the tragedy. There was a pause in the tide of the whole affair, and the perpetrator of the crime was by circumstances allowed to run loose. As I have described, the doctor's statement was decidedly misleading, and, naturally, the neighbours of Mrs. Thomas never for a moment dreamed that the remains of the "young woman of between twenty and thirty years of age"

could by any possibility be part and parcel of the "bright little lady" who was between sixty and seventy. Again, the law's delay came in. The police were looking for the head of the victim and other parts of the body for conclusive identification, so the inquest was postponed until the 10th of March.

Kate Webster (this arch-fiend) must have felt her security for the time being, for she gave way to a kind of reckless dissipation, which is common enough amongst those who unexpectedly or by the committal of some crime become possessed of money which they have not been accustomed to.

Let us follow her at this period. She has further cultivated the friendship of the Porters at Hammersmith, and she has been introduced to Church, the publican of the Rising Sun, at Hammersmith. So far has Kate ingratiated herself into mine host's good favours, and so familiar have they become through the business of the sale of the goods at Vine Cottages that he spends a great deal of time in the Irishwoman's society. He is a frequent visitor to the cottage, and they are seen together in cabs and walking in each other's company in Richmond and elsewhere. They are known to address each other as "Kate" and "John," and whilst upon one of their excursions together she takes a fancy to a pair of large ear-rings of common, inartistic pattern, and asks the publican to give her the money to pay for them.

How dangerous was the companion of the publican afterwards transpired, and he who, seemingly, had no more to do with the woman (as it transpired at the trial) than ordinary business, undoubtedly behaved with the greatest indiscretion, and was within an ace of being indicted (even at this early period) as an accomplice. There is no doubt, however, that the man thought her a woman of some importance, for the brazen Catherine had the audacity to carry her mistress's bunch of keys, "flash" her cheque-book, and parade her papers. She evidently turned the publican's head for the time being, for she had not only a fascinating way of her own, but certainly took the lead in all their pleasures and entertainments, and had an unconquerable low passion for "pulling up at pubs," asking "cabby" to stop where they could get a "drop of something good."

So it would appear that the Irishwoman and her select companions had a right royal time of it, sometimes staying out all night, at others entertaining her favoured guests at the cottage.

Yet the astute Kate knew very well that this life of dissipation could not last. She was getting short of funds, and forthwith pressed on the sale of the furniture at Vine Cottages, having already disposed of plate and small articles long before. She was clever enough to watch and scheme quickly, for learning, by means of the papers, to which I was constantly reporting, that the adjourned inquest upon the unidentified remains would be held upon the 18th of the month, she determined to clear out of Richmond.

THE GRUESOME DISCOVERY AT BARNES BRIDGE.

In the meanwhile, it is necessary to mention that Scotland Yard had taken the matter out of the hands of the local police, and were energetically endeavouring to unravel the mystery in connection with the box found in the Thames, for the jury had returned an open verdict at the inquest, no evidence of identification being forthcoming.

The detectives, however, had no clue, and those residing in the vicinity of Vine Cottages, although not for a moment associating the Thames mystery with the disappearance, became curious and talkative about Mrs.

Thomas's absence. The first to make any startling remark about it was the brewer, who called for a small account of nine shillings. Webster paid him, and, in reply to the man's question as to whether he should call again for orders, the woman said, "There is no need; Mrs. Thomas is in eternity." This and many other circumstances caused the neighbours to gossip, and undoubtedly the Irishwoman felt that the place was getting a little too warm to hold her.

So she determined to mature her schemes at once. Porter (who was, by the bye, a painter, living at Rose Gardens, Hammersmith), together with Church, arranged to shift the goods for the supposed Mrs. Thomas. She had already received from the latter the sum of £22 (for which he held, it was stated, securities in the way of plate, etc.), and the agreement was that an additional sum of £50 was to be handed over when the goods were taken away. This was all arranged, apparently, in a most business-like manner.

And now we will loiter amongst the curious, who are always ready to gather round the furniture of others when being removed, and we shall see and hear something that will immediately arouse our suspicions.

It is about ten o'clock in the morning of March 18. A couple of vans are drawn up in front of the house, No. 2, Vine Cottages, Park Road, Richmond. As usual, the blinds at the windows of the surrounding houses are pulled aside, and women's heads are to be seen; servant girls open the street doors, apparently without an object, and linger on the doorsteps. No bugle-call could have sounded a reveille with more immediate response than did the grating of the wheels of these furniture-vans, for the whole neighbourhood seems to have turned out, and is up in arms with curiosity.

Kate Webster appears at the door, and every preparation has been made to move quickly. A few boxes are hurriedly deposited in one of the vans, pictures and odds and ends are placed in the doorway ready for removal, and the woman, with rather an excited gait, ascends the stairs for more articles. As the men are turning up their sleeves to shift the heavier pieces of furniture, a lady appears in the front garden adjoining. To the dismay of the men, who are easily recognised as Church and Porter, Mrs. Ives (for she it is, the owner of the property) says, in a loud and stern voice:

"What are you doing with those goods?"

"We are about to remove them, mistress, if you must know. They have been sold," replied Church.

"You cannot remove that furniture. Mrs. Thomas has taken the house for a term of years, and I am the owner. You dare not take them away in her absence. Where is Mrs. Thomas?" demanded Mrs. Ives.

"Upstairs," said Porter. "I'll call her down, and soon settle this business."

Little suspecting why she is called, Catherine Webster hurries to the door to see what is the matter.

"What is the meaning of all this?" asked the lady. "What right have you to remove your mistress's things in her absence? What authority have you for doing such? Tell me immediately, where is Mrs. Thomas?"

"If people would mind their own business," mutters Kate spitefully, "it would be all the better for them."

The men look startled; but when Webster says coolly, "Mrs. Thomas has taken another house, and these goods are to be removed there," they feel very uncomfortable, and look at each other in dismay.

Webster, with characteristic boldness, now enters the garden of her neighbour, and there is a brief altercation, and the Irishwoman, in a rage, returns to the house, and, taking therefrom some dresses and a few articles, throws them into the van, saying, "Take these, at any rate. I'll soon put matters right and return with the proper authority."

Then, having put on her jacket and hat, she left the house, with a small bag in her hand, desiring her friends to continue packing the van until she came back.

But a very brief conference with each other, and a short interview with Mrs. Ives, decided them as to the course of action. They determined to leave all the things where they were, putting everything save the clothing back into the house, shutting the door, and driving off.

But we must not lose sight of the principal actress in this remarkable tragedy. Kate, on turning the corner, hails a cab, which, fortunately for her, is at the moment passing, and disengaged. She drives direct to Church's house at Hammersmith, sees Mrs. Church, borrows a sovereign, saying that she has no change, and then makes her way to a house, and in a few minutes reappears with a little boy. Together with the child she takes train to King's Cross,

Walking in each other's company.

and thence, booking by the 10.10 p.m. for Liverpool, crosses by the train boat to Ireland.

So within twelve hours of the arrival of the van to remove the goods at Vine Cottages, Kate Webster is a fugitive, still unassociated with the crime, and unfollowed, steaming away by rail and boat to her native land, where we will leave her whilst we follow the progress of events in London, which from this moment, as may readily be imagined, crowded quickly one on the other.

The police were communicated with, but nothing was actually done until the 20th had passed (two days after Webster's flight), when Church and Porter examined the dresses which had been thrown into the van by the Irishwoman. In the pocket of one was a letter addressed to Mrs. Thomas, Vine Cottages, Park Road, Richmond. It

was from another suburb of London, and signed "Mehennick." Church determined to call upon these people, and, if possible, clear up the mystery. The Mehennicks knew Mrs. Thomas very well, and described her as a "spare little woman, bright, active, and fair." The woman known to Church was a "tall, stalwart, black-browed, deep-voiced Irishwoman."

It was at once recognised that something was wrong, and that very evening Mr. Mehennick wrote to Mrs. Thomas's solicitor, a Mr. Hughes, of Finsbury Park, who at once went to Richmond, and, with the assistance of the police, forcibly entered No. 2, Vine Cottages. Immediately it was seen by Inspector Pearman that a foul deed had been committed. The furniture was in a state of disorder, the carpets up, and everything just as left by Webster on the day of the proposed removal. But on careful examination it was found that calcined human bones had been swept under the kitchen range and copper furnace, and that fatty matter was deposited upon the copper stick and in the copper, which was smeared with grease as if it had been used in the boiling operations. The whole of these suspicious substances were sent to Dr. Bond, and the place was taken possession of by the police.

Instantly it dawned upon the boy Porter and those in possession of the details of the case that the remains found in the box were those of Webster's victim, Mrs. Thomas. This was proved conclusively, for young Porter swore to the box, and other evidence put the matter beyond question.

But where had Kate Webster fled to? There was no information upon the subject. Fortunately, however, for the detectives, the murderess had set a trap to catch herself. In one of the cupboards of her bedroom hung a dress belonging to the fugitive, and in the pocket was a photograph of herself and a letter addressed to her from her native place, Enniscorthy, in the county of Wexford, Ireland.

Immediately Inspectors John Dowdell and Jones were in pursuit, one travelling viâ Liverpool, and the other viâ Holyhead, with arrangement to meet each other in Dublin. She was speedily tracked, and on the 28th of March the following telegram was received in London from Dublin:

> "A woman named Catherine Webb or Webster (alias Lawler) who is supposed to have murdered Mrs. Thomas, was arrested to-day by the constabulary at Killaun, near Enniscorthy. She is a native of Killaun, and was traced there by Head-Constable Callaghan, of the Wexford Station, who gave her over to the London detectives. A little boy was with her. Her proper name is Lawler, She has a ticket-of-leave, having been sentenced for some offence in 1867."

The London officers lost no time. Once in custody Kate displayed little concern, only for the boy, which she seemed to have a great affection for. She prayed that the child might be taken to her uncle, who was a small farmer living near. This request was granted, but her relation would have nothing whatever to do with her or hers under the circumstances, and it transpired that the poor little boy (who, it may be mentioned, was born in the Kingston-on-Thames Union) had to be taken to a workhouse in Ireland, from that day motherless and friendless.

If there was a soft place in this fiend's heart, it was found at the parting with her boy, for the Inspectors admitted that it was heartrending.

After the warrant was made out by Mr. Robinson, the magistrate, Inspectors Jones and Dowdell made their way some fourteen miles into the country in order to search the house at which Kate had been staying. There they discovered a box in which there were clothing, a photo of John Church, and one of his address cards of the Rising Sun, Hammersmith. They then took their prisoner to Dublin, and, boarding the mail steamer, had a private cabin reserved. During the run across they gleaned the whole of Kate Webster's version of the tragedy, a copy of which, made from Inspector John Dowdell's notes and afterwards signed by the prisoner, I was enabled to peruse. It will be interesting to give, for it conclusively proves what a cool hand she was.

"Is there any person in custody for the murder?" asked Webster. The inspector said that he could not answer the question.

"Then there ought to be; the innocent should not suffer for the guilty," was Kate's reply, with great earnestness and with a deep sigh.

She kept a very calm demeanour throughout the whole of the journey, according to the statements of the two detectives; and, on the passage upon the steam packet boat between Kingston and Holyhead, she exclaimed suddenly, "What would you advise me to do in the matter? I intend to speak the truth. I may tell you that I have known John Church for nearly seven years. I first got acquainted with him when I was living two or three doors from him at Porter's. He used to take me up to London and to various public-houses. I met him again some months ago, and he came to my mistress's house one night the worse for drink. After some time, I told him he would have to go, as I expected my mistress home from chapel. She came home, and knocked at the door, and I let her in. Church was in the back room at the time.

"My mistress went into the front room, and said, 'Kate, don't you think I am very late?' I said, 'No; as I have company.' Church had previously told me to say that he was my brother.

"Mrs. Thomas said, 'Who have you got here?' I said, 'My brother, who has come to see me.' I may tell you that at this time Church was getting sober. Then Mrs. Thomas went into the back room and spoke to him, and asked him to come into the front room to the fire. After a long and pleasant chat, she said that, as it was getting late, perhaps he would like to stay all night.

"'No,' he replied. 'It is impossible for me to stay out all night, as Kate knows.' He then, in a most cordial manner said good night to Mrs. Thomas and I let him out.

"A few days after that he called again, and during the conversation we had (Mrs. Thomas being again absent from home) he asked me if my mistress had any money, and I told him that she kept very little in the house.

"Then he said to me, 'Could we not put the old woman out of the way?' And I looked him full in the face, and asked him what on earth he meant. He whispered into my ear in a dreadfully mysterious manner, 'Why, poison her. We could have her things and go off to America together and enjoy it, for I am getting tired of my old woman.'

"He left late that evening, but came again on the Monday night, the 3rd of March, and had tea with Mrs. Thomas, and I waited on them. After tea I asked Mrs. Thomas if I might go out to see my boy, and she said, 'Yes, Kate, and you need not hurry back.'"

The story was then continued to the two detectives. One of them, with Webster's consent, made notes all the time, and at the police-court at Richmond I had the opportunity of gathering much which lent to the effect of the extraordinary statement by this strange woman. I thought at the time that she would have made (had she been properly educated) a successful novelist, whose work would have well compared with the thrilling tales of Boisgobey, Gaboriaus, and Dr. Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes." Indeed, this long, rambling statement, made by the woman whilst crossing from her native land to the country in which her fate was to be sealed, is not the least interesting part of the whole story of the crime, and, when published after Mr. Pollard, the solicitor to the Treasury, had read it in Court, induced thousands of people to believe her version of the story and declare that Church, if not actually the murderer, had played a very prominent part in its execution.

But to continue this remarkable woman's version of

the affair, when it will be seen what a dramatist or novelist she might have been.

"When I returned late in the evening after seeing my boy, I knocked three times, and there was no response. I noticed that the lights in the parlour were lowered, and I imagined that Church had gone, and that my mistress had retired, thinking that I should not return that night.

"Presently the door quietly opened, and Church clutched me by the arm, and whispered, 'Be quiet! Quick—quick! Come in!' I felt that something dreadful had happened, and had a feeling that I must scream. I wish that I had done so, for opposite our house was a policeman—a tall, dark fellow—and if he had but come across the road at that moment I never should have been in this terrible position. But I had no time. Church dragged me into the passage, and placed his hand over my mouth. Then, to my horror, I saw my dear mistress lying upon the mats in the passage.

"I said, 'Whatever have you done?' He looked at me fiercely, and, still clutching me by the arm, said, 'Never you mind. I have done for her, and if you say a word about it I'll put this knife into you up to the handle.' He then pushed me into the easy-chair, and offered me a tumbler with what appeared to be water in it; but I thought it might be poison, so I refused it, saying that I was better. I then said, 'No, John, I won't tell; but let us get out of this place at once.'

"We left the house together, leaving Mrs. Thomas where she was, and took a cab. He saw me into Mrs. Porter's house, and went home himself. I was up early in the morning, and Church was waiting for me outside, and beckoned for me to follow him up the street. He said, 'I cannot get over to your house before one o'clock, as I got into a row with my wife last night for being out so late, and I must stay at home this morning to make it up with her.'

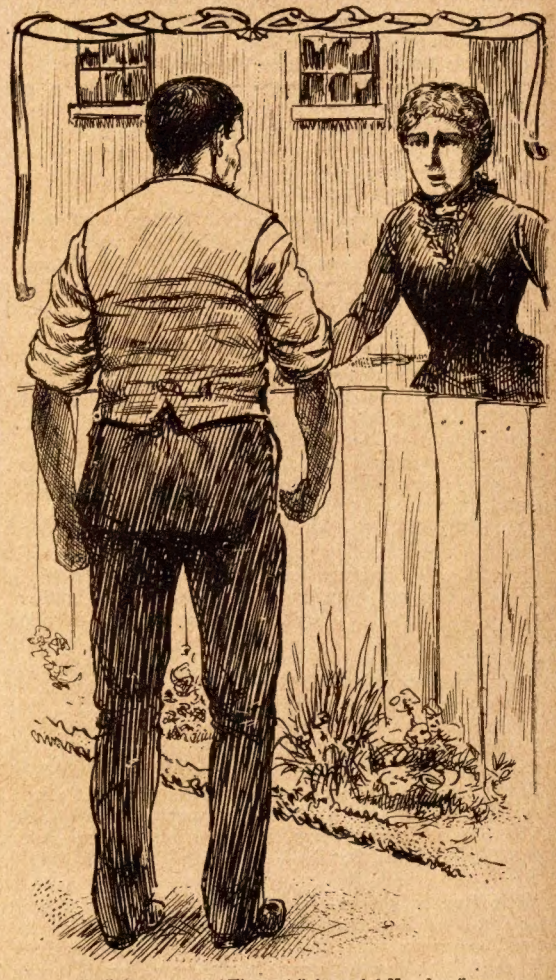
"I told him that I would not go back to the house by myself. He had the keys of the front and side doors, and he said he would be at the house by two o'clock. I then arranged to meet him at the Richmond Hotel at night. This I did, taking young Porter with me. Leaving the boy outside, I spoke to Church in the bar. He told me to go to the house with the lad, and I should find a box in the kitchen which he had packed up, tied with a cord. The boy was to assist me to bring it away, and I was to take a cab if one passed us. We arrived at the bridge, having seen no cab. The boy went away, and Church appeared. He took the box. I said 'What are you going to do with that box?' He replied, 'That is my business.' He then, after telling me to follow the boy, left me, and I heard a splash. Young Porter and I then went to the railway station, and I found there was no train, so he came with me to Vine Cottages, and there slept.

"Next morning, on going down to the kitchen, I found the carpeting rolled up, and the table, with a leaf let down, placed against the cupboard. The boards were wet, as though they had been recently washed. There was no signs of the body. About two days afterwards I was cleaning the scullery, and I saw blood on the carving-knife, and the saw, which usually hung by the fireplace, was on a box, quite clean.

"Since Mrs. Thomas disappeared, Church, Porter, and his boy have been frequently to the house. Church told me to settle several bills, and to pay Mrs. Ives, the landlady, to save a bother; but she refused the money, and thought there was something wrong. Church then became alarmed on the morning when the things were about to be removed, and said to me, 'Don't move the things. You will have to clear out, and go to your friends'. I then left. He gave me a card with his address, and said I was to write to him, and he would stop at home and brazen it out.

"This was on the 19th (Tuesday), and I reached my uncle's in Ireland on the Friday night. I wrote to Church to his address in Hammersmith, telling him I had arrived safely. He had promised to send me money, and we were to go to America. I swear that I never laid a hand upon Mrs. Thomas and had nothing to do with murdering her; but I knew Church had done it. All the money in the house belonging to Mrs. Thomas was a five-pound note and thirty shillings. The note I changed at a fishmonger's in Richmond. Church and Porter were with me at the time. I intend to tell the whole truth, as I do not see why I should be blamed for what Church has done."

Such was the pith of the version of the story as told by Kate Webster, and formed the main features of her defence. Of course, Church was arrested on the strength



"Where is Mrs. Thomas?" demanded Mrs. Ives."

of the woman's statement, and from the knowledge of the prominent part he had played in the matter. He protested his innocence; but, although he was found to be a man of most respectable connections and had formerly been in the 11th Hussars, from which he was discharged with a good conduct certificate, the thing looked very black against him.

On the 31st of March, Webster was charged at the Richmond Justice Room and Vestry. All who were present outside or inside of the court upon that occasion will never forget the scene. The greatest excitement prevailed, and thousands of persons had congregated in order to get a glimpse of the now notorious Irishwoman. She was perfectly calm, and I remember, as I watched her features narrowly in the court, I was strangely impressed with her determined and bold expression. Her face gave me the idea of that of one who was being persecuted rather than

accused, and a good many people felt that she meant bravely and successfully to establish her innocence, and had no fear of failure.

But when the charge sheet was read a murmur went throughout the court, for she was described as Webster—alias Webb, alias Shannon, alias Lawless, and alias Lawler. It then dawned upon everybody that she was an old seasoned gaol-bird, and that her composed expression under such trying conditions had been gained by much practice.

She was removed, after such evidence had been given as enabled the magistrate to commit her for trial, to the House of Detention, Mr. O'Brien having defended Webster, and Mr. Claydon acting for Church.

In due course she was brought to trial at the Old Bailey, throughout the whole of which I sat and found many interesting and dramatic incidents to record at the time. I think, however, I have given quite sufficient of the story of this cold-blooded murder to enable my readers to learn the history of this atrocious tragedy without inflicting the details of the crime as laid out before the jury at the trial.

Long before its termination everybody knew that the verdict would be "Guilty," especially when Church (who was tried also upon the capital charge) was set at liberty. Her counsel asked the jury to believe that the actual murder had not been proved, and even went so far as to throw out a theory, for which, of course, there was not a tittle of evidence, that Mrs. Thomas had died from natural causes. But that fell utterly to the ground when Kate Webster herself most foolishly asserted that a murder had been committed. Once that having been done there could be no question as to who had committed it.

Kate Webster was on the spot; she had an opportunity of committing the crime; she carried the box to Richmond Bridge; and her whole conduct was that of one who had something to conceal. What alternative theory could be plausibly placed before the jury?

As we have seen, she attempted to implicate Church and Porter; but her accounts were vacillating; they were in some respects proved to be absolutely untruthful, and in all highly improbable. Then, again, the changes made in her statements from time to time were just those amendments which would occur to such an astute mind as that of the prisoner's. What also proved fatal to her statements were the inconsistencies of the dates in her early narratives, and the effect of the testimony of Porter's and Church's friends.

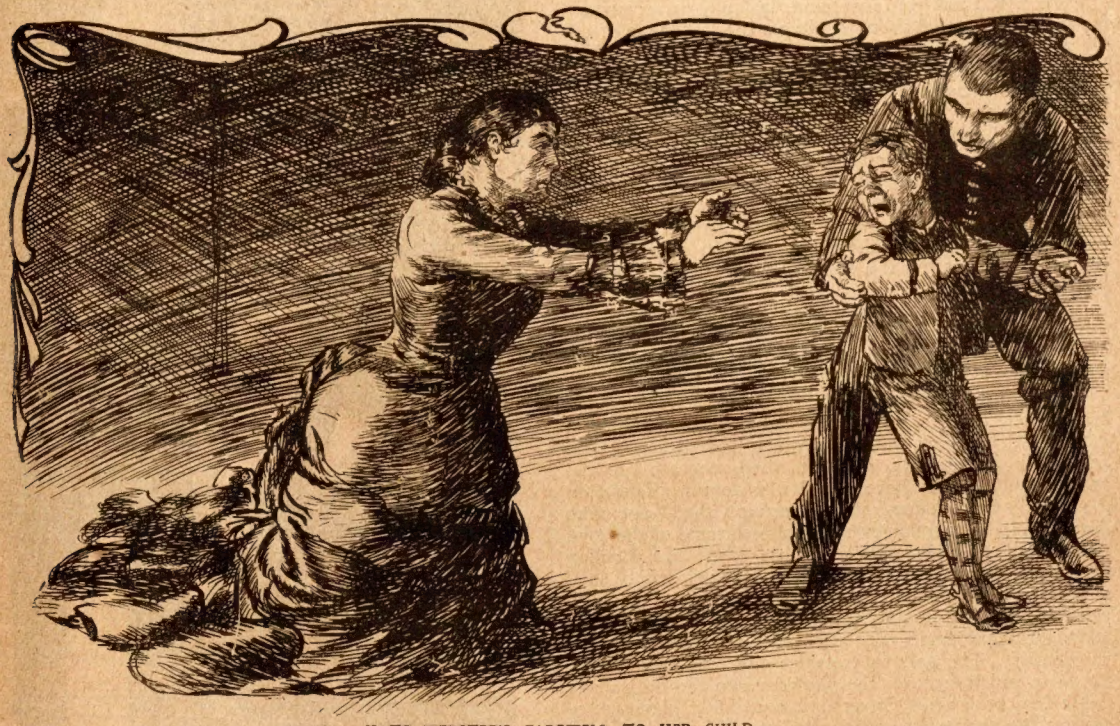
There was no difficulty for the Solicitor-General to show the inherent absurdity of much of her story as to Church's and Porter's share in the matter, and, luckily for Church, he could show by unquestionable testimony that at the time she said he was at Vine Cottages he was present at a benefit and burial club. He was of course altogether exonerated; but he had behaved, as the judge told him, in a marvellously imprudent manner. Several suspicious circumstances pointed to him as privy to the crime, and but for the fact that he was able to prove the alibi, his position would have been highly perilous.

On the jury finding her guilty, and the prisoner being asked if she had anything to say why judgment should not be passed upon her according to law, she made the following statement in a firm, audible voice:

"I am not guilty, my lord, of the murder. I have never done it, my lord. When I was taken into custody I was in a hurry, and I made a statement against Church and Porter. I am very sorry for doing so, and I want to clear them out of it. And, another thing. I was led to this, my lord. The man who is guilty of all this is not in the case at all, nor never was. Therefore, I do not see why I should suffer for what other people have done. There was a child put on to my hands in 1874. I had to thieve for the child, and go to prison for it. Therefore, the father of that child is the ruin of me since 1873 up to this present moment, and he is the instigator of this; but was never brought into the affair. I am not guilty, my lord."

In reply to the Clerk of Arraigns whether she had anything to say "in stay of execution," the prisoner pleaded pregnancy, once more proving that she was capable of clutching at every straw to save her infamous life.

A jury of matrons was then and there empanelled



KATE WEBSTER'S FAREWELL TO HER CHILD.

to inquire into the truth of the allegations made by the convict. The matron of the prison gave certain evidence in contradiction, and Dr. Bond proved that the prisoner was not "quick with child." A verdict was therefore returned accordingly, and Kate Webster was conveyed to Wandsworth Gaol, there to await her execution, which was set down for July 29, 1879.

From the close of the trial to the eve of the execution she maintained a dogged reticence, seeing and conversing only with her Father Confessor and the wardresses. She seemed hardened to everything in this world but one, and that was the love of her child. She begged and prayed that one of her friends might bring it from Ireland, so that she might hold it in her arms once before she died. This child-love and the non-arrival of the little boy (whom it had been promised she should see again) was the greatest punishment to Kate Webster, far greater than the gallows, and this yearning caused her the greatest agony, for she had no tears but for her infant.

And now I ask you once more in fancy to accompany me to Wandsworth Prison, to witness the last scene of all. By a curious coincidence I am writing these concluding lines at nine o'clock in the morning of the 2nd of March, 1903, exactly twenty-four years to the day from when Kate Webster committed her crime. As I pen them it seems that I can hear the tolling of the bell in the same gaol where at this very moment and on the very same spot is being hurried into eternity the soul of Edwin Owen (or Edgar Edwards), the murderer of the Darbys, under somewhat similar circumstances to that of Mrs. Thomas by Kate Webster, and the history of which in time to come will prove as sensational a story as that which I have just related.

As I write and still fancy I can hear the solemn bell this morning, the whole picture of the execution of Kate Webster comes before me as if it had happened but yesterday.

There is the small piece of ground with the well-kempt bright green turf just outside the chapel. On two sides it is enclosed by brick walls into which plain stone tablets are let in at intervals, marking where beneath are the graves of others who have met similar dooms. There, on the left, is the wooden-fronted execution shed—not more than 15ft. in height, nor twice the size of some of the road contractors' portable offices we see when our London streets are being repaired. Indeed, the execution shed at Wandsworth would seem to be built on this model with wooden door and sliding panel in centre, and might be taken for a gardener's outhouse. But the interior reveals its identity. The gallows to which the rope is attached, the lever which removes the platform into the drop many feet below the level of the ground, need but a glance at to suggest the simple but awful machinery for the taking of life. All this I see before me as plainly as can be conveyed by the mind's eye.

Hush! It is a quarter to nine exactly, for that was the first toll of the bell, and it sends a shudder through all who are present. Everything around is as silent as the grave, save the warbling of some birds in the trees of an adjoining garden, for it is a bright, fresh summer's morning, with naught but the blue sky overhead. See, there comes the woman descending that short flight of stone steps—she is walking upon her tomb! She is steady enough and seems quite resigned as she moves slowly, leaning upon the arm of her confessor, Father M'Enry.

You care not to look farther? Marwood pinions her, assisted by the warders, and she is placed upon the small platform, and the rope is adroitly adjusted. The cap is pulled over her face as the Roman Catholic burial service is read in solemn tones by the priest. Coming to the words:

"Jesus, good shepherd, come,"

the response is heard:

"Lord, have mercy upon me!"

There is a slight noise as the lever is pulled, and Katherine Webster, the murderess, is dead.

* * * * * *

At the inquest, held immediately after the execution, Captain Colville, governor of the prison at Wandsworth, said in answer to the coroner, "She made a confession of the crime last night. It was intimated to me by the Rev. Mr. M'Enry, on his leaving the prison at ten minutes to ten o'clock last night, that the prisoner said to him, 'I alone committed the murder of Mrs. Thomas. I was slightly excited by having taken some drink, and when my mistress came home I was aggravated by her manner.'"

The governor then explained that he had on the morning of the execution followed up this confession by

"I alone committed the murder."

speaking to her about statements implicating other people, and he asked her if he might say that those statements were untrue. She replied that the statements were not true, and that the man whom she had charged with the crime had nothing to do with it. Before being removed from the condemned cell she more than once expressed her gratitude for the kindness and attention she had received from the matron, the officers, and from the governor himself. She was keenly sensible that she was kindly treated.

And so this infamous woman met her death, fortunately having relieved her mind by exonerating all others, and by so doing satisfactorily clearing up "The Barnes Mystery."

"GUILTY, MY LORD!"

THE PLEA OF AUGUSTUS HILTON, WHO WAS SO STRICKEN BY REMORSE FOR THE MURDER OF HIS WIFE THAT HE RESOLVED TO SUBMIT TO THE VENGEANCE OF THE LAW.

"Guilty!" the voice rang out so clear
It startled all who heard.
Guilty! He stood without a fear
As he pronounced the word."
—PORTER.

IN the annals of crime there have been many instances in which the act has been immediately followed by remorse, and by a frantic invocation of punishment. There are, however, few cases on record in which the criminal has been so simply and unfeignedly resolute to expiate his sin by submission to the retribution of human justice as in that of Augustus Hilton, who was tried at the Cambridge Assizes in July, 1861, on the charge of having murdered his wife on the 2nd of March of that year. There was no hysterical shrieking for instant immolation on the part of this strange criminal. From the moment when he discovered that life had fled from his victim, he deliberately awaited the fate which he felt he had deserved. He made no effort to justify himself in the eyes of men. He knew he could not give back to his loved one the spark of which he had robbed her, and the only reparation he could make was to sacrifice his own existence. In the fierce passion of the moment he had done to death the being that was dearer to him than all other, and he firmly determined to follow her, and in another world to plead for that forgiveness which she could never grant him in this.

They had had their tiffs on many occasions—what married couple so loving as to be entirely without them?—but his hot blood had never before risen to such a pitch as to cause him to raise his hand against her. Yet, as he confessed, he had meditated upon the crime for some weeks. Charlotte, beautiful and tender as she was, had a will of her own, and Augustus possessed an ungovernable temper. They were as flint and steel. Charlotte's tongue struck sharply, and the fire flew.

She was indeed a lovable creature, with all her faults. The villagers of Leverington, where they lived, spoke of her in the most endearing terms. Both the murderer and his victim had lived among them all their lives, and so the inhabitants knew them intimately. Hilton was said to be a good enough sort of fellow, but—of course there was a "but"—hasty, and sometimes he took a drop too much. His wife disapproved of his convivial habits, and that occasionally led to unpleasantness between them, as such things have since time immemorial.

Both the parties were in a respectable position of life. Hilton was a farmer of Leverington, Parson Drove, near Wisbech, in Cambridgeshire, and Charlotte, his wife, came of decent people. Her father was proprietor of a steam engine and flour mill at Parson Drove, and was also a subcontractor of railways. When the crime was committed he was away constructing a line in Derbyshire, and Mrs. Hilton, with her brother, a lad of about 15, managed the old man's local business for him. On the whole, Charlotte appears to have been a highly commendable woman of business, for she kept not only her father's books, but those of her husband as well.

"She was a rare good 'un at lookin' arter things," an old farmer remarked at the inquest. "I only wish as I had gotten a darter like her."

This encomium was echoed all round, high and low testifying to Charlotte's excellent business qualities.

Occasionally Hilton bought corn for the mill, and it was doubtless for that purpose the couple drove over to Wisbech market on Saturday, the 2nd of March.

In the afternoon, when their business was transacted, Mrs. Hilton wished to return home, but Augustus was not inclined to leave the hotel where they had put up their trap. There were several of his chums there, "droothy neebors," and the "market glass" was passing rather freely. As has been said, Mrs. Hilton sternly set her face against over-indulgence in the "flowing bowl," and thought it best to get her husband away before he had partaken of more than was good for him.

"Shall I have the mare put in the shafts, Gus?" she asked, more than once.

"Wait a bit, lass," he replied; "I just want to have a word wi' John here."

"It's been 'wait a bit, lass,' with you for the last half-hour," she said tartly, "and whether you like it or no, I'm going to have the mare put to."

"Then you can drive her home by y'rself," he retorted, "for I'm not goin' to budge for another hour."

"Oh, won't you, though?" she cried. "I'll see about that," and away she bounced and gave the order for the cart to be brought round.

When her husband heard the rattle of the wheels, and saw it waiting for him outside, he was considerably nettled.

"What's the meaning o' this, Charlotte?" he shouted. "D'ye think I haven't cut my eye-teeth yet, and am to be treated like a baby?"

"That's all you are," she returned hotly, "or you wouldn't be so easily led by other folk. Come along and take the reins."

Very reluctantly Augustus Hilton left his cronies, and climbing into the trap, drove off with his wife by his side.

Charlotte was triumphant over gaining such an easy victory, but her husband was cross and quarrelsome. He had been enjoying himself in his own fashion, and she had curtailed his pleasure. It was intolerable, and the evil thoughts which had haunted him for some time again came into his head. Charlotte was always crossing and worrying him when he was happy, and why should he stand it? It had become persistent, and was a source of constant trouble. He'd make an end of it—hanged if he wouldn't! It was true that the house they lived in belonged to her father, and was occupied by them rent free; but what of that? Held in the balance with Charlotte's tongue it had little weight.

It was going on towards four o'clock when the pair left Wisbech in their gig, and they had not driven very far when they began to fall out. Charlotte was somewhat close-fisted, and Hilton declared she had not given him enough money to pay for some wheat. This dispute continued all the way home, and they were still nagging at each other when they sat down to tea, and their maidservant, who was in the room, heard Hilton ask his wife for another cup of tea.

"No; you've been slandering me all the time I was at Wisbech," replied the wife snappishly; "and do you think I come home to wait on you in this way? No, I won't; I'll die first!"

"So you shall!" he cried.

Some more bickering ensued, and then he told her to get the slate and make out the account for the wheat. Upon that she ordered a boy to put the mare in the gig, as she meant to go to her aunt's that very night, and would stay there. Afterwards she went upstairs to put on her things, and her husband followed her in a towering rage, first closing the kitchen door. Then the door upstairs was shut with a terrific bang, and immediately the sound of screams and scuffling was heard.

The boy and the man, who had by this time come with the gig, ran up and tried to force the door, but could not. It was effectually fastened against them.

In the meantime Hilton had deliberately cut his wife's throat. The servants heard the poor girl moaning (she was only twenty, poor thing!) and one heard her shriek "Murder!"

Shortly afterwards, upon her brother making an attempt to get into the room, the murderer admitted him.

"Look you here, Joe!" Hilton exclaimed, pointing at the bleeding corpse, "I've done for her! I've been goin' to do it for some time, and now I've done it!"

What rendered this crime the more terrible was the fact that the deceased was within a month of her confinement with her second child, the first one having died in infancy. Hilton and she had been but two years married, and before their wedding a more amiable couple had never been seen. Their early wedded life had been most blissful, but the demon of discord had gradually crept in, putting their happiness

to rout, till the awful consummation of murder had been reached.

After the deed the murderer placed all the business books belonging to his father-in-law, and which his wife used to keep, upon the fire, and then coolly put his hands into his trousers pockets and sauntered out of the house and yard, remarking to every person that he met, "I have done the job!"

He proceeded to his father's residence, a few miles distant, in the next village, and told them that he had "done for Charlotte!"

While there he drank a large quantity of liquor, and was subsequently apprehended by the police-constable stationed at Parson Drove.

"I never take a job in hand without going through with it," he observed to the officer of the law, and went with him as quietly as a lamb.

After his incarceration at Cambridge, however, Hilton became violently excited, and such was his terrible remorse that two turnkeys had to remain with him constantly in his cell. Within two or three days, notwithstanding the frenzy which had first possessed him, his excitement calmed, and he gradually became more tranquil. It was then that the idea of pleading guilty to the charge occurred to him, and of this we find the culmination at his trial, which did not come on till the Summer Assizes, having been postponed from the Spring on application of his counsel.

When the prisoner was arraigned on the bill of indictment found at the previous Assizes, and on the coroner's inquisition, he was, as is the custom, asked to plead. Without hesitation he answered: "Guilty, my lord!"

Mr. Justice Wightman, sitting on the bench, raised his eyebrows in surprise. He had never listened to such a plea in a murder case before, and it puzzled him exceedingly. Clearing his throat, he addressed the prisoner.

"I am not quite sure," he said, "that you perfectly understand the precise nature of the charge to which you have pleaded guilty. The charge is not merely that you killed your wife, but that you murdered her, by which is meant that you killed her with deliberate intention so to do, or, as the law expresses it, that you did it 'with malice aforethought,' or without any such excuse or provocation as might possibly—I do not say it would—reduce your crime to manslaughter. The defence, if any such exist, may be shown if your case be tried. I may also say that, in my opinion, the interests of public justice will be best advanced by a full and open trial. It is for these reasons that I recommend you most earnestly to reconsider your determination and to put yourself on your trial. I must, in addition, warn you not to expect the slightest mitigation of your sentence in consequence of the course you now pursue."

"I won't alter it," replied the prisoner quietly.

"I cannot prevent you, if you are determined so to do," observed the judge. "I have no power to enter a plea of 'not guilty' for you; but I ask you once again—do you still persist in your determination to plead guilty?"

"Yes, your honour," Hilton returned.

"I'M NOT GOING TO BUDGE FROM HERE FOR ANOTHER HOUR."

The judge then turned to Mr. Metcalfe, the prisoner's counsel, who had been retained by the prisoner's friends on his behalf.

"I have explained to him," Justice Wightman remarked, "the nature of the charge to which he is asked to plead, and he persists in his plea of 'guilty.' I cannot alter it."

"I am instructed by his friends," Mr. Metcalfe replied, "who have offered him every assistance in their power, to defend him. I spoke to him myself on Saturday, and did all I could to induce him to take his trial, but without effect. He seemed then, as now, quite resolved to plead as he has done."

"I have no power to direct a plea of 'not guilty,'" said the judge regretfully.

"And I have no power to defend him against his will," rejoined the barrister.

"Once again, I ask you," said Justice Wightman very solemnly, "after what has been said, do you still persist?"

"Yes, my lord," Hilton answered. "I shall not alter."

The clerk of arraigns then read the formula in an emotional voice:

"Augustus Hilton, you stand convicted of the wilful murder of your wife, on your own confession. What have you to say why sentence of death should not be passed on you to die according to law?"

The prisoner made no answer.

Mr. Justice Wightman then put on the black cap and said:

"Prisoner at the bar, you have, after full and anxious warning, confessed yourself guilty of a foul and cruel murder. I should have been better satisfied, and the interests of public justice perhaps better served, if the circumstances of your guilt, by means of a public trial, had become more fully known. But it is right to say that the evidence of the witnesses, as returned on the depositions, leaves no reasonable doubt in my mind that you are indeed guilty, and that there were no such circumstances of provocation or of excuse as could in any way reduce your crime below that of wilful murder. That you followed your wife upstairs to her room with the intent to kill her is certain; the instrument you used, the nature of the wound, your own expression afterwards, lead

The murder.

to no other conclusion. It is not my duty, nor is it my inclination by anything I now say, to aggravate the horror of the position in which you now stand. By the law of God and of man, you have incurred the most fearful penalty of the law; I do sincerely trust that the penitence I am informed you have expressed is sincere, as it is my duty to tell you that there is no hope for you on earth. For the short time now left to you, I implore you to cast your thoughts beyond the grave, and to endeavour by earnest prayer and sincere repentance to obtain the mercy in heaven you cannot have here. It now only remains for me to pass upon you the sentence of the law, which is, that you be taken from where you now stand to the place from which you came, and thence to the place of execution, and that you there be hanged by the neck until you are dead, and that after your death your body be buried within the precincts of the gaol where you shall have been last confined; and may heaven have mercy on your soul!"

The prisoner, who throughout the proceedings had shown no sign of either indifference or distress, listened attentively to the sentence, and when it was concluded stepped down from the dock apparently with perfect composure.

It was understood that the prisoner was anxious at the previous assizes to plead guilty; but his friends exerted themselves to procure evidence in his favour, either of insanity or of provocation, to reduce, if possible, the crime to manslaughter, and instructed counsel to apply to postpone the trial. The crime having then been so recently committed, the application was acceded to; but it was believed the prisoner himself never faltered in his determination to plead guilty, and his resolution, as herein related, he carried out to the bitter end.

In reference to this murder, the "Times," in a leading article devoted to the "Atrocities of the Times," says:

"What a picture of sullen, dull, quarrelsome respectability is that Wisbech murder! A miller and his wife wrangled about a little money as they drove home from market in a gig. Matters became worse as they sat over their tea, at the conclusion of which the irritated husband resolved to kill his wife, who, alarmed at his manner, intended to go home to her father (sic). When she went upstairs to get ready, the husband closed the doors downstairs, followed her, murdered her in her room, walked to her father's house (sic), avowed the crime, waited for the policeman, with whom he conversed freely on the subject, and wound up very suitably by obstinately refusing to return any plea but 'Guilty,' accepting the inevitable consequences of the deed. What must be a man's state when he deliberately merges his whole existence in the destruction of one whom he had sworn ever to love and to cherish! Of course, we can never know the misery such a mind must have gone through, either by its own moodiness or by incessant provocation, before it could come to this pass. That such crimes must be, we are told by the annals of all ages and countries; but need they abound as they do, and that not in the uneducated, the neglected, and the starving, but in those respectable middle-classes which are the pride and, as many think, the staple of England? When crimes of this sort are found in the classes above wretchedness and destitution, it is too natural to conclude that they are not provoked by accidental circumstances, but are too sure a sign of prevalent defects, brooding, sullenness, pride, revenge, and other faults generally found in one class as much as in another. It is some consolation that we know all the evil, for every outrage finds its way into the courts and the journals, and there is no room for exaggeration or indefinite suspicion. The case is bad enough, but we know the worst."

It only remains now to state that after his condemnation Hilton took the advice of the judge and spent the hours left to him in prayer and devotion. At the last he bore up with the same fortitude that had characterised him all through. When his friends wished to get up a petition for the commutation of his sentence, he would not allow them to go on with it. "No, no!" he said. "I wish to die. I wish to go to my wife." And so wishing, he walked calmly to the scaffold and passed to eternity with satisfaction in his soul.

A Capital Pigeon.

As Justice Northington was walking along Parliament Street one rainy afternoon, he picked up a handsome-looking ring, which was immediately claimed by a gentleman, who declared he had just lost it, and, having accurately described it, the ring was returned to him. On receiving it he was so grateful and so pleased at recovering his lost treasure that he insisted on the finder joining him at a bottle of wine, and they accordingly adjourned to an adjoining coffee-house, and drank and talked together on various matters for some time. They were soon joined by three other gentlemen, and the judge quickly perceived that he was in the hands of a gang of "ring-droppers." He kept his own counsel, and pretended to agree to everything they said, and very soon a game of cards was proposed. The judge overheard one say to another: "D—— the cards! he is not worth the trouble! Pick the old flat's pocket at once!" Judge Northington lost no time in getting away from his unsavoury companions, and, begging to be excused for a minute, he slipped out at the back and left the sharps lamenting.

Some two or three months afterwards he was on Circuit, when, at Warwick, three of the four men he had conversed with and slipped on the day he found the ring were ushered into the dock on a charge of picking pockets. They were found guilty and sentenced to long terms of penal servitude, but during the luncheon hour Justice Northington visited them in the cells, and, referring to the incidents of the wet Saturday, asked them what induced them to think he was such a flat. Whereupon one of them replied: "We beg your lordship's pardon, but whenever we see a gentleman with white stockings on a dirty day we consider him a capital pigeon, and pluck his feathers, as we hoped to pluck your lordship's."

The Murder of the Countess Gorlitz

"Whose was the mind that planned
The awful deed? Not mine.
Whose the accursed hand
Now dyed in blood? Not thine.
Whose, whose indeed?"

—KENNETH.

FIFTY years ago the many petty States which are known to us as the German Empire had not yet been united in a general allegiance to the Prussian Crown, but each supported a minor monarch of its own, and boasted a Court, ministers, and an army. One of these small German dukedoms was at the time of which we write Darmstadt Hesse.

The Grand Duke of Darmstadt Hesse lived in regal style in a palace, with a great number of servants, guards, ministers and courtiers. Personally, the duke, like all the members of his court, was miserably poor; but he boasted an ancient pedigree, was proud, and was a man of gigantic height. All these qualities made him very popular with his people; the indisputable fact that he was an impotent pawn on the board of European politics not disturbing the Teuton serenity of his subjects' minds in the least.

The chamberlain to the duke was a nobleman named Count Gorlitz, and it is with him and his affairs that we are chiefly concerned. Count Gorlitz was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with an easy manner and an exalted opinion of his own position. He was fond of hunting, shooting and duelling, at all of which pastimes he was an acknowledged master. It is not hard to understand that a nobleman possessed of such pleasing attributes as we have above quoted, who had the strength of a giant, and who had, on more than one occasion, killed his man in fair fight, was exceedingly popular in German society. Count Gorlitz was the hero of all the Darmstadt drawing-rooms; the great dames who ruled in social circles regarded him with the most favourable eyes, and took pleasure in his company and conversation, especially when their daughters were present. All the young unmarried ladies who basked in the sunshine of the Grand Duke's Court were ready to surrender their hearts into the count's keeping for the asking. The count was so brave, so noble, such a fine man!

In spite of all the adulation, however, which was squandered upon him by the opposite sex, in spite of his predominant popularity, Count Gorlitz remained a bachelor, and seemingly wedded to the single state. This obstinacy on the part of the count caused a great deal of disappointment and not a little heart-burning in the immediate circle of his intimate acquaintances, and this was sensibly deepened when quite unexpectedly he proposed to and was accepted by—as is always the case in these matters—the very last person in the world whom anybody would have credited with the transcendental charms and graces which were popularly supposed could alone drag the count forth from his immurement in the dungeons of celibacy.

It happened that a young lady of the name of Blumein Hersdorf came on a visit to a certain great personage attached to the Darmstadt court. Blumein had never before experienced any of the gaiety and excitement attendant upon a fashionable life in town. She had lived with her parents, who were poor people, but of ancient and honourable lineage, in the seclusion of the country. There she had dwelt on the borders of a great forest, with the nearest village four miles distant, all her childhood and youth, with no company save her parents, an old doctor, and a few elderly women. However, it one day pleased the great lady attached to the Darmstadt court to remember that she had some friends resident in the forest of D——, and, happening to be travelling in the district, she surprised them with a visit, the first one for twelve years.

At first sight she was struck by the beauty of Blumein, whom she last remembered as a child of seven, and, finding that her mind and character corresponded admirably in their inherent purity and charm with the attractiveness of her outer person, carried her off forthwith to Darmstadt, where she made little doubt Blumein, from her grace of manner, loveliness of features, and, above all, her absolutely untainted and unsophisticated habits of thought, would cause considerable sensation at the court of the Grand Duke.

This proved to be the case even more than Blumein's chaperon had foreseen or expected, and culminated in the offer and acceptance of Count Gorlitz in marriage.

As has been said, the announcement of this fact caused no little surprise, for, although Blumein had been acclaimed by one and all as a beautiful and delightful girl, it had never for one moment been suspected that upon her would fall Count Gorlitz's choice. Heretofore that nobleman had always sought the society of women entirely different in habits and characteristics to Blumein, women of a sterner mould, fond of hunting, fierce, disposed rather to be masculine than otherwise, and wholly opposite to the shy, demure child who had promised to be his wife.

Blumein was indeed opposed to all popular conceptions of the woman who would one day rule the count's household. She was tall and disposed to be slender; her face was small, her complexion of dazzling whiteness, just tinged at the cheeks with the shadows of a rose; her hair, which was long and straight, was of bright amber colour, and her eyes were of the darkest violet.

In manner she had the trembling shyness of the dove, but at times and on occasion could impart great dignity to her utterances, and speak with a firmness and an air of settled conviction which one would hardly have suspected in a girl so young. From the first her heart had gone out to Count Gorlitz, his handsome person, strength of character, and almost fierce terseness of speech appealing irresistibly to her, where the persons and qualities of all others left her cold and unsympathetic. In short, she dreamt of the count as the Knight of Great Achievement, and the count dreamt of her as the Mystical Lily found in the wood. The end of all this dreaming was a mutual confession of love, followed by marriage.

All Darmstadt was at the ceremony; the Grand Duke condescended to appear in royal person, the flower of the nobility was present, and the groundlings assembled in crowds, threw up their caps and cheered lustily. Blumein, Countess of Gorlitz, was at once escorted to her husband's castle, where she was installed with proper solemnity and rejoicing.

The girl accepted her new and exalted position with the calm grace of one born to great things, and this highly delighted the count and his relations. The only person who cherished misgivings in any form was Blumein's mother, a woman shrewd and far seeing, although the greater part of her life had been passed in comparative retirement from all scenes of excitement and social intercourse.

When, some few weeks after the marriage, she was being congratulated by one of her few friends on her daughter's good fortune, she delivered herself of the following opinion:

"I am inclined to think that the marriage is unfortunate."

"Unfortunate! Good gracious! what can you mean?"

"I will tell you. Blumein and Count Gorlitz have been reared in widely different schools. Where my daughter's ideas and convictions are narrow, the count's will be wide and conveniently lax."

"I do not quite understand."

"Well, Blumein will expect from her husband eternal love, fidelity and unwavering constancy."

"Yes," answered the friend; "that is but natural."

"I do not think the count is of a nature to give so much to his wife. You see, he has been brought up in an atmosphere of gallantry, and probably regards with levity subjects which to my Blumein are sacred."

The friend said that she thought the countess's mother was alarming herself unnecessarily, and went her way.

We will go ours, which leads us back to the newly-married couple, now comfortably installed in the Castle of Gorlitz. At first everything passed in almost heavenly serenity. Apart from the time occupied by his duties at the royal palace, as High Chamberlain, the count was never absent from his wife's side. They read together, walked together, rode together and thought together. This state of things

continued for over a year, and the count's confidential valet, generally a taciturn and uncommunicative personage, named John Stauff, informed his father that he believed "there never had been so happy a couple on earth."

Then Blumein gave birth to a daughter, an event which, unfortunately, happened to coincide with a visit from a brother Royalty to the Court of Darmstadt Hesse, so that Count Gorlitz was of necessity much in attendance at the Grand Duke's palace, and seldom with his wife. It appears that the countess took this to heart, and reproached her husband with his continual absence. The count considered her unjust in her remonstrances, was not slow to inform her of his opinion, and a quarrel ensued between the young people.

After the first disagreement, others followed in quick succession, and John Stauff, the count's valet, to whom we are indebted for much of our information, reported to his father that, following a violent scene, the count and countess retired to separate wings of the house, and did not see each other for three days.

Gorlitz spent many hours at the Royal Palace, and when he had concluded his duties there, would linger sometimes for the best part of the day, playing at cards with his brother officers, and flirting lightly with the ladies. In spite of all this, we have no hesitation in saying that he was still devoted to his wife. A curious way of showing it, you say? Yes, undoubtedly; but we must remember Gorlitz's birth and education, the fierce and haughty stock from which he had sprung, and the curious environment in which his character and habits had ripened and solidified.

If Blumein had wept, and complained of his continual absence, we have no doubt that he would have at once made amends to her in his altered conduct and bearing; but the countess had stood upon her rights, had demanded from him as her just due what she would have obtained with greater ease by pleading. The result of this is not hard to conjecture. Blumein and the count each took their individual stand upon their personal rights, and refused to budge an inch either backward or forward; they were both too young to see the folly of their position, and in consequence maintained it with the greatest obstinacy, and, naturally, coolness, reserve, and acrimony grew up between them. The count would not give way, would not admit that Blumein had any right to demand of him what she was doing—i.e., passive obedience—and Blumein declined likewise to abandon her position because she considered herself a wronged woman.

All this was faithfully reported to his father by John Stauff, the faithful valet, who, it may be observed, took an uncommon interest in the doings of his master and mistress.

About this time another lady came upon the scene. She was attached to the Court of the Grand Duke of Darmstadt Hesse, and was noted for being the most daring horsewoman in the dukedom. She was dark, with a ripe, full figure, rather large lips, and heavy-lidded eyes; a direct contrast to Blumein. Count Gorlitz, a famous rider himself, took much interest in watching and participating in the equestrian feats of Anna B——. Smarting under what he considered was the unjust censure and displeasure of his wife, he—partly, we think, out of chagrin and partly out of that inherent spirit of mischief in mankind, which we call, for want of a better name, "devilment"—attached himself to Anna, rode with her, talked with her, and in a very short time found himself making love to her.

At first, it seems, Gorlitz, who was small judge of character, imagined that he could tease his wife into submission by indulging in a little harmless flirtation. He was doubly mistaken. His conduct only succeeded in perpetuating his exile from his wife's heart, and in a short time it proved to have evolved itself into something very different from the "harmless flirtation" that he intended it to be. One day Anna asked the count for an explanation.

KILLED HIS MAN IN FAIR FIGHT.

"Count, you say you love me?"

"I swear it."

"You lie."

"My love, you are not complimentary."

"I tell you the truth. Your heart is with your wife."

The count winced, his cheeks flushed, and he looked away from Anna in an awkward manner.

"Dearest, you mistake. What is my wife to me?"

"What am I to you?"

"Everything."

"Ah! we will see." Anna placed her arms around the count's neck, looked steadfastly into his eyes, and, with her lips very close to his, said, "Take me away, fly with me, abandon this petty court and the wife you do not love; take me away from it all and be with me for ever."

Gorlitz turned hot and cold, looked away and stammered incoherently.

Anna broke from him with an ironical smile.

"Ah, you see, my friend, I was right. You do not love me; you would not do what I ask if I really meant it. As I said, your heart is with your wife. With me you are amusing yourself. I have been a fool!"

In spite of this scene, the intimacy between Anna and Gorlitz did not cease; it would seem that the woman had not sufficient strength, perhaps not desire, to snap the cords of bondage that were bound about her heart.

Blumein had for some considerable time visited the palace but seldom, so that the liaison which her husband had contracted did not reach her ears with the celerity it would otherwise have done. But scandal is an accomplished traveller, and, sure enough, found its way in good time into the Castle of Gorlitz. Blumein was astounded. She could never have believed that her husband could act with such perfidy. She called up John Stauff and questioned him in a cold, listless manner as to his master.

Stauff answered that the count had gone out that morning to ride in the forest with the Lady Anna B——. He went on to explain that Gorlitz and Anna frequently rode together, and gave a great deal of information gratuitously about his master which had much better have remained unsaid.

When the count returned to the castle he was told that the countess wished to speak with him at once. As this was

He rushed from the blazing room.

now a somewhat unusual event, he hastened into her boudoir, with all sorts of lively expectations humming in his brain. Perhaps this was going to be a reconciliation. The hope was speedily dispelled by the manner of welcome Blumein extended towards her husband.

"It has come to my knowledge," said she, "that you have contracted an improper intimacy with a lady attached to the Grand Duke's court. Do you deny it?"

"I deny nothing, I admit nothing," answered the count in a high temper.

"There is no need to add lying to your other faults," said Blumein.

"I should not trouble to do so. May I ask for what reason you have granted me the favour of this interview?"

"To tell you that for the future I can no longer be a wife to you. That I shall occupy my own apartments and live by myself. You are free to adopt whatever course best fits your fancy." She swept from the room without another word.

Blumein had a wonderful faculty for keeping her promises, and from that day she and the count might have been the most casual acquaintances for all they saw or knew of each other. Occasionally they would meet on the staircase, or in the forest, or in the courtyard, when they bowed and passed on without further salutation.

The countess retired to the remotest wing of the castle, one which had for over a generation remained uninhabited, where she took all her personal furniture, books, jewels, and dresses. She had the rooms fitted up under her own directions, and at an age when her contemporaries were all thinking of nothing but pleasure and gaiety, voluntarily subsided into an unhallowed cloister, and led the life of a recluse. The extraordinary state of affairs between the count and his wife rapidly spread, as a favourite matter of gossip, all over Darmstadt Hesse. Some were enthusiastic on the side of Blumein, whilst others declared themselves partisans of Gorlitz, vowed that his wife's conduct was unwomanly and unchristian, and said broadly that if they had been blessed with such a helpmate they would make short work of her and her self-imposed martyrdom.

Meanwhile the intimacy between Blumein's husband and Anna continued, and became, indeed, more open and undisguised than before, and the seal which was to close the whole matter, the seal of terrible tragedy that was to be affixed to the wretched screed of cross purposes, misunderstandings, bickerings and disagreements loomed large in the "near distance."

One day in the early spring of 1850 Count Gorlitz returned from the Royal Palace somewhat sooner than usual. He was not to see Anna that evening, and rode homewards through the forest, determined to settle several matters of business at the castle which had been awaiting his attention some time.

As he came in sight of his ancestral hall, as was ever his habit, he glanced up at the grey, half-ruined old tower at the extreme left of the building, where his wife had taken up her quarters. He looked, as he often looked, in the hope of seeing the quiet, pale face gazing through the window; but to-day Blumein was nowhere to be seen, and Gorlitz passed into the courtyard of the castle, wondering why his wife had so many lights burning at such an early hour in her rooms.

He set to work on his papers, but somehow or other felt strangely distracted and nervous.

He opened the door of his room and walked out into the long stone corridor. He fancied he smelt something burning. He walked in the direction of his wife's apartments, and was met by a dense volume of smoke rolling up from the rooms which Blumein inhabited.

With a cry of horror and dismay the count rushed forward. Blumein's door was locked.

With the strength of a giant he threw himself against the stout oak. It groaned and cracked; the lock snapped; the door was open. He was in the room blinded by the smoke, hot with the warmth of the flames that were consuming the bed, couch, and curtains, and sick with a horrible, unnatural smell which pervaded the atmosphere.

"Blumein! Blumein! my love!" he cried, staggering forwards and groping for his wife like a blind man, with outstretched arms that felt everything they came in contact with, for the density of the vapour made it impossible to discern any object with accuracy. At last his hand touched something lying near the bed; something warm, soft and rounded; something instinct told him was the form of his wife, Blumein. He caught up the body and rushed from the blazing room. The household was now aroused, and a crowd of dependants clustered round the door. They took the count's burden from his arms and supported him from falling.

Cries of horror, shrieks of terror, and shouts mingled in Gorlitz's hearing. What did it all mean? Was he mad or dreaming? He rubbed his bloodshot eyes free of the smoke, and looked—looked on the object he had carried from the burning room.

It was the body of Blumein.

Horror of horrors! she had been burnt to death. Her face and bosom had been charred to cinders.

So sickening was the spectacle that several women servants who were present at the scene fainted, and of the men, John Stauff alone seemed able to keep his head. He at once removed the body of the dead Blumein into a neighbouring apartment, and then started fighting the flames, which had by now taken a strong hold of the walls and wainscoting. After great difficulty the fire was got in hand and finally subdued, the count rendering little or no assistance, being quite prostrated with grief.

It was noticed by several persons that the room in which the dead countess had been found had been locked on the outside. This aroused their suspicions, which were stimulated by their inability to assign any reason for the conflagration which had so recently subsided, and wonderment that the dead woman should have allowed herself to be consumed by the flames without crying out for assistance, or endeavouring to escape.

The last phenomenon suggested a startling theory, namely, that the countess *had been dead* before the fire had been ignited; that she had met her death by foul means, and that the subsequent act of incendiarism had been committed

by the guilty hand of her murderer to hide or efface all traces of his guilt.

Who would murder Blumein?

Suspicion pointed to the count, who was notoriously estranged from his wife and the lover of another woman. The parents of the dead girl arrived on the scene, communicated their doubts to Gorlitz, and requested that the body of their daughter should be examined by the surgeons. The count refused. This act of his was, by many, held as clear evidence that he had poisoned his wife, and that he was afraid of discovery if the contents of the girl's stomach were analysed.

Great pressure was brought to bear on the count; it was represented to him that by denying Blumein's parents the right to have the body dissected, he was obscuring his own character under a cloud of terrible suspicion. Still Gorlitz refused, and Blumein was buried.

Her apartments were searched, and her jewellery was found to be missing, with other valuables. An organised hunt for the missing articles resulted in failure.

Some days after Blumein's death John Stauff brought up to the count some especial soup for supper, as Gorlitz had tasted hardly anything since the tragedy. He did not eat the soup, but gave it to his dog. The animal vomited, went into convulsions, and died. Count Gorlitz preserved the remainder of the soup and had the dog's stomach analysed. The poor beast had been poisoned!

Great suspicion now fell on John Stauff, and he was arrested, protesting his innocence. His room was searched and a diamond brooch found. His father's and brother's cottages were likewise searched, and the remainder of Blumein's valuables were discovered, hidden in straw, placed in chimney corners and all manner of odd places. The body of Blumein was now exhumed, and a quantity of poison, of a similar character to that in the soup, was discovered in her stomach.

John Stauff was accordingly tried for murder, was found guilty, and sentenced to penal servitude for life. His father and brother were sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment.

So ended this peculiarly base and sordid tragedy.

Count Gorlitz, whose life had been well-nigh unbearable from the suspicion attaching to himself since the crime, once more walked abroad with a rehabilitated character.

It was not long before he joined Blumein in the halls of death.

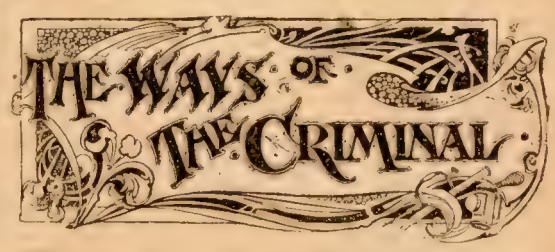
May they rest in mutual forgiveness, understanding and eternal love!

A French Solomon.

In the year 1780 an extraordinary and gigantic diamond robbery was perpetrated at Lyons, and the French police were quite unable to discover the criminals. Having exhausted every means of discovery in their power, they at length resorted to the expedient of sending one of their officers to the chief prison, disguised as a prisoner, to undergo a sentence. While in the company of the principal French thieves, he acted his part admirably, and interested his listeners by the narrative of the exploit of the robbery, in all its clever details. The assembly of connoisseurs were delighted with the story, and in the exuberance of delight, one of them exclaimed admiringly, "It is only Philip who could do such a job as that!" This assertion at once gave a clue to the real criminal, Philip being found to have been the leader of the gang who planned and perpetrated the robbery.

He Helped His Counsel.

A young man of seventeen, named William Beddows, was tried in Glasgow in the year 1829 for picking a gentleman's pocket. The witnesses for the prosecution gave their evidence, and the prosecuting counsel in his address to the jury clearly demonstrated the guilt of the accused. The latter listened to all this with apparent indifference, but when his counsel stood up to address the jury in his defence, the prisoner leaned forward with the greatest attention. His lawyer eloquently denounced the opposing witnesses, and the unreliable nature of their evidence, and went on to say: "If this young man had taken the money, where, I ask, could he have placed it? Not in his pockets, for, you know, they were likely to be examined first. Not in his shoes, for these, too, would for a certainty be also examined. Where, then, I say, gentlemen of the jury—where could this lad have stowed away the money? Where was there a place he could have found to hide it away?" At this point the lawyer paused to give effect to his words, and the prisoner, fearing that his counsel was actually waiting for assistance, and was at a loss, exclaimed: "I put it in here, sir!" pointing to an inside pocket.



XXVIII.—HOW TO DETECT CHEATING AT FARO.

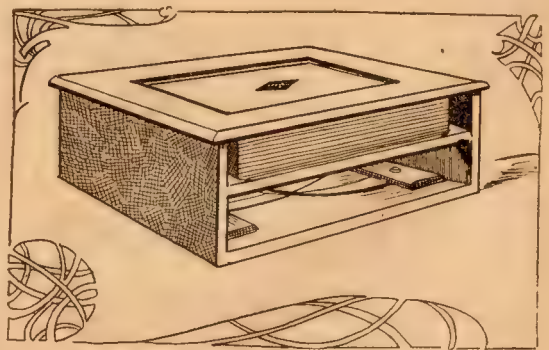
There is no card game which affords such opportunities for organised cheating as faro, and no game for which so many swindling devices are manufactured by the firms who flourish in the big cities of the United States.

There are several reasons for this, but the principal one is the fact that in the game itself several mechanical devices have to be used, and these can easily be made to work on the cross.

In faro, it may be as well to mention, the cards are not handled by the dealer. The pack is shuffled on a "shuffling board," and then placed in a metal box, pictures of which are given herewith. As will be seen, there is an opening in the top of the box through which the face of the top card of the pack can be seen. Underneath the pack, and attached to a platform on which the cards rest, are two strong springs, which press the cards against the top of the box. Our first picture shows a back view of the machine, with the pack of cards in position. The top of the box slightly overlaps the front, and underneath is a slit, which in "straight" boxes is only wide enough to allow of the passage of one card at a time. Through this space the cards are slipped out by the dealer, who presses on them with his thumb in the open space at the top. The cards, by the way, are placed in the box from the back. Then there is the "case-keeper," as it is called in the catalogues, a contrivance which is used to record the cards as they are played. As will be seen from the illustration, this appliance consists of a framework of wood, inside which is a complete suit of cards and thirteen rods, upon each of which are four small balls. In faro the suits of the cards are of no importance, only values count, and so as the cards are played the man operating the "case-keeper" records them by moving the balls from their position near the cards to the frame. Thus when an ace is played one of the indicators opposite the representation of that card is slipped to the side, and so on all through the game, so that the players at any stage can tell exactly what cards have been played and what remain in the box.

There also are "cue cards," which the players sometimes use. These are on the same principle as the "keepers," except that, instead of the balls, the players mark the cards as they are played, an "o" for winners, and an "x" losers.

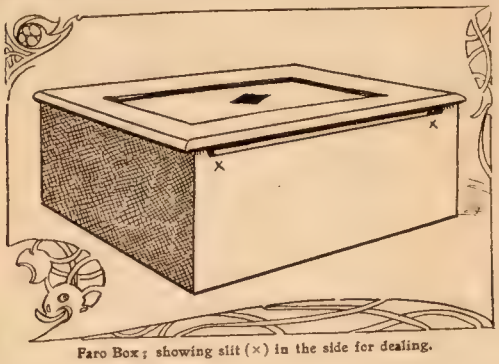
The "spread" or "lay-out" is as shown in the illustration, whilst there is also a special table made for the game—oblong, with a cavity in one side for the banker—which is also depicted by our artist.



Faro dealing box; showing interior arrangement.

In front of the "lay-out" on the table is placed "the shuffling board," with the box upon the left of the board. The "banker" sits in the space provided, and when the

stakes have been laid on the facsimiles of the cards on the "lay-out" he proceeds to deal by slipping out the cards as already described. The players may bet upon whichever



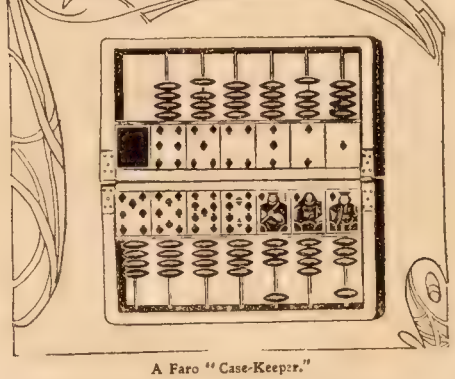
Faro Box; showing slit (×) in the side for dealing.

cards they please, or they may couple up the cards and bet that one of a series of high or low or picture cards will win. The top card, which is visible, is not played, and the cards win alternately for the players and the bank. The players are really betting upon the order in which the cards will come out of the pack. If a ten is drawn and the players have staked their money on the corresponding card in the "lay-out," they win, receiving the amount of their stakes. If no one has backed the card the dealer draws nothing. The next card wins for the dealer, and if any money has been laid upon it he takes it. So the cards are drawn off one after the other, the case-keeper checking each, until all have been played. When two successive cards are of the same value it is known as a "split," and when this occurs the bank, without losing anything, draws half the money laid on the table. Naturally the bank is very partial to "splits," and special arrangements are made so that these occurrences are pretty frequent. This is contrived in a variety of ways. When the cards are drawn from the box those that win are placed in one heap and those that lose in another. The dealer, if he is on swindling bent, uses the opportunities thus afforded for creating "splits," and deftly arranges the cards so that two of a kind shall get together in the shuffle

There are, it may be mentioned, two kinds of cheating at faro—one when the bank cheats the players, and the other when the players cheat the bank. Of course, in the latter case a "mug with money" has been lured by the swindlers to take the game, after everything has been prepared for his plucking.

The chief instruments used when the players are swindling are the "tell boxes," which are of two kinds, the "sand tell" and the "needle tell."

The "sand tell" box is used for cards which have been

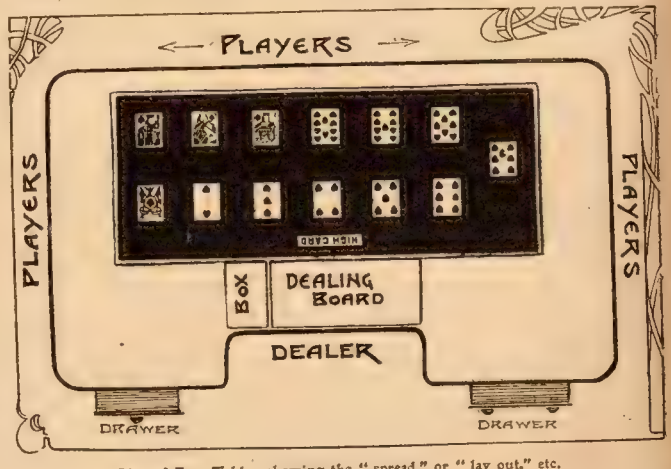


A Faro "Case-Keeper."

specially prepared—that is roughened on one or both sides with the aid of sand or glass-paper. The cards which are intended to "tell" are not tampered with and are thus smooth on both sides; all the others are treated to a slight rub with the glass-paper. This takes the glaze from their surfaces and causes them to stick to each other when two of them are together in the pack, whilst they will slip about on the surface of the cards which have not been treated.

"The effect produced in dealing," says "Sharps and Flats," "is as follows: if the third card from the top is one of those which has been roughened on both sides the second card will adhere to it; consequently, the act of drawing off the top card will not cause the second to alter its position in the box. If, however, the third card should happen to be one of the tell cards whose face has been left smooth, the top card will draw the second one a little distance to the right. The second card, however, cannot be drawn right out because the slit is not wide enough to allow more than one card to pass at a time. (It may here be explained that the front of the sand tell box is twice as thick as that of the fair box.) It is obvious then that if the players have some means of knowing whether the second card moves or not they can tell whether the card immediately below it is a tell card or the reverse."

Of course, the cards only move a very slight distance, but in order to make sure about them all the roughened cards have a very faint dot placed upon their faces. This dot, which is called a "sighter," wnen the card is in its proper position is right at the edge of the aperture in the top of the box. When the card slips it is, of course, more towards the middle of the opening. The mark is so faint that only those who know of its presence can discern it,

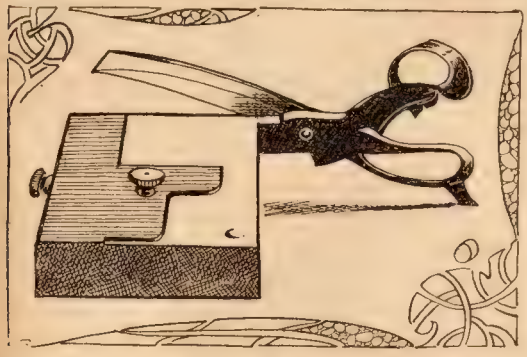


Plan of Faro Table; showing the "spread" or "lay out," etc.

and then only when they are possessed of a keen pair of eyes. With the assistance of the "sand tell" the swindlers can win as they please.

The "needle tell" is a more complicated affair. For this box the cards are shaved at one side right along to the end, where a small piece is left projecting on the tell cards. When the tell card arrives at a certain position in the box the projecting end presses against a spring and causes a needle to project from the side of the box. This is sufficient indication for the sharpers, who arrange their bets accordingly. Sometimes it is one of the rivets in the side of the box which is made to "tell," *i.e.*, project slightly farther from the box than did the others.

The card press which we illustrate is a highly-finished device, and is used when the dealer is cheating the players. All the cards in the pack are treated with the glass-paper, and the pack is then put in the press and squeezed together as tightly as possible. This has the effect of causing the cards to stick together, and the dealer can deal two whenever he pleases, for the box he is using has a wider aperture than that possessed by the fair boxes. The two-card box, however, is the most expensive "tool" a swindler can use. It is the "lock-up square box" described in the catalogues, the "square" meaning that it appears to be a fair box upon examination. "Some of these boxes," says the authority already quoted, "are made to lock by sliding them along the table. The bottom moves a little, this movement serving to fix all the movable parts. Some are so arranged that they are always locked, and can be examined at any time. When it is required to widen the mouth and allow two cards to pass out together a small piece of wire, or 'needle,' as it is called, is made to rise out of the shuf-

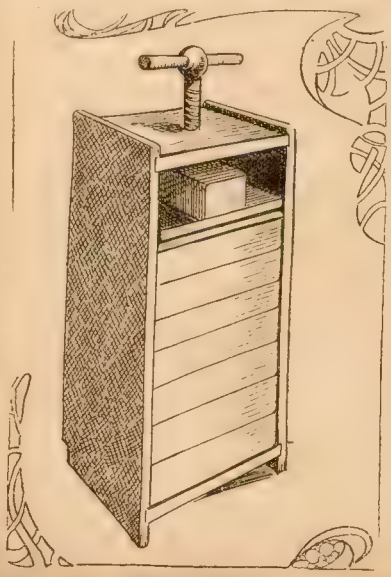


Trimming Shears.

fling-board (on which the box stands); this, pressing against one of the rivets or into a small hole in the bottom of the box, unlocks the mechanism for a moment. Another form of the two-card box is one which has the bottom plate made of very thin metal, the 'springing-in' of which when pressed upon in the centre unlocks the 'fake.'"

A Faked or "Trimmed" Card.
The dotted line in the diagram shows the original edge. Of course the trimming is exaggerated in the diagram.

Now, before the cards are shuffled they are counted, to see that the number in the pack is correct. After this has been done the dealer shuffles on the board, and during this operation causes the extra card to be added to the pack, for the shuffling-board, a special one used for the occasion, is nothing more or less than a clever "hold-out," such as those described in previous articles. The cards added to the pack are of the same denomination as one which belongs to the pack, and which has been prepared for emergencies of this kind, that is, possesses the projecting end. Supposing this card to be an ace, another ace similarly prepared is added by the "shuffling board." When the cards are being dealt in the box each ace proclaims its presence, and the dealer then has to act as circumstances guide him. It if serves him to deal the first one squarely he does so, and when the second one arrives top but one he brings the necessary pressure to bear on the box, in sporting parlance, "works the squeeze," and deals two at once, or vice versa. The cards, of course, indicate their presence by causing the needle in the end of the box to project. The needle in the "shuffling board" is worked by knee pressure.



Faro Card "Press."

Then in the matter of shuffling, the dealer, if he is a swindler, can place the cards so that the bank is practically bound to win almost every time. And especially is this the case if the players are at all lax. As a rule, if they are "mugs," they are not sufficiently strict, and the dealer, instead of placing the winning and losing cards in two distinct heaps, throws them down anyhow to all appearances. As a matter of fact he very deftly and cleverly arranges them to suit the players he is opposed to. Then in the shuffle he can place the cards to suit the play. If the players have been backing high cards all the while he arranges so that high cards lose for them; if low cards, then he arranges that low cards lose. And then, too, he has the "splits" as a further money-getter.

Our readers may be interested in knowing the cost of the various implements we have mentioned. Here is a page from the catalogue of an American manufacturer of swindling devices referring only to fare "tools":

FARO TOOLS.

	$
Faro Boxes—German silver, finest	8.00
Silver-plated	10.00
To hold two packs	18.00
Sand Tell	20.00
,, ,, to lock square	25.00
Lever movement	50.00
End or Needle	100.00

CASE KEEPERS.

Walnut, wood markers	6.00
Rosewood, wood markers	10.00
,, Composition	11.00
,, Ivory	15.00
Card Sighters. Set of 4 in case	2.00
Glass-paper, per doz. sheets	1.00
Knee Pressure Needles (these are for the "shuffling board")	5.00

FARO SPREADS.

With or without high card, broadcloth	10.00
Broadcloth on straight board	15.00
Broadcloth on fold-up	18.00
Broadcloth on mahogany fold-up board	20.00
Enamel cloth lay-out	5.00
,, ,, ,, on straight board	7.50

TRIMMING SHEARS

(for cutting the cards for the "needle tell box").

Double bar, brass block	40.00
With attachment for cutting briefs	45.00
Lever movement, brass block	30.00
Cutter for cutting round corners	20.00
Trimming Plates, cut any style card	10.00
Faro tables	40.00 to 50.00
Card presses	0.60 to 4.00
Shuffling boards, iron, very thin broadcloth cover	3.00
,, ,, wood ,, ,, ,, ,,	2.00
,, ,, for needle boxes	12.00

A Question of Age.

MRS. BORRODAILE, the chief victim of Madame Rachel's machinations, was a lady considerably advanced in the "sere and yellow" stage; but she was remarkably vain, and it was this weakness which made her such an easy prey to the crafty madame.

At the trial of that impostor, Mrs. B. was asked her age, a point on which she appeared to be unduly sensitive. "I was married in 1846," she said.

"But I asked your age," pressed the counsel who was examining her; "your age, madam?"

"Oh!" replied the fair witness, "the same age as anyone else, I suppose!"

The Matter-of-fact Chaplain.

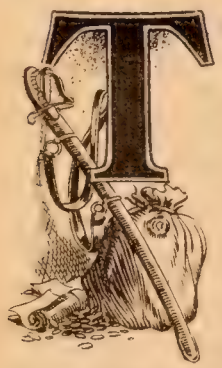
A WELL-KNOWN barrister had successfully prosecuted a man charged with a double murder, and had secured a verdict after a very short deliberation on the part of the jury.

As he was proceeding to dinner after the trial he was joined by the chaplain of the local gaol, where the prisoner had been confined. The reverend gentleman remarked: "Well, Mr. A——, so you've bagged your man!" with great sang froid, which rather astonished the legal luminary, who expected some show of feeling from "the cloth."

THE TRUE STORY OF THIS WORLD-FAMOUS DRAMA.

The Courier of Lyons.

"How dangerous is it that this man goes loose."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Hamlet," Act IV., Scene 3.



THE records of every country abound in remarkable cases of persons being judicially put to death for crimes of which they were entirely innocent. A mistaken resemblance to the actual perpetrator, the fact of being seen near the spot where the crime was committed, or some other suspicious circumstance, has contributed to bring the guilt and punishment on the wrong party. At one time cases of injustice were also committed by condemning individuals for murder when it was not proved that a murder had been perpetrated. The now well-recognised principle in criminal law, that no murder can be held as having been committed till the body of the deceased has been discovered, has terminated this form of legal oppression. Another—and, perhaps, one of the most common causes of injustice in trials of this nature—is the prevarication of the party charged with the offence. Finding himself, though innocent, placed in an awkward predicament, he invents a plausible story in his defence, and, the deceit being discovered, he is at once presumed to be in every respect guilty.

The following account of the peculiar circumstances surrounding one of the most celebrated cases of injustice ever practised may be found interesting.

In the month of April, 1796—or, according to the dates of the French Republic, in Floreal of the year 4—a young man, named Joseph Lesurques, arrived in Paris with his wife and his three children from Douai, his native town. He was thirty-three years of age, and possessed a fortune of 15,000 livres (£600) per annum, inherited from his own and his wife's relations. He took apartments in the house of a M. Mounet, a notary in the Rue Montmartre, and made preparations for permanently residing in Paris and educating his children. One of his first cares was to repay one Guesno, proprietor of a carrying establishment at Douai, 2,000 livres he had formerly borrowed. On the day following Guesno invited Lesurques to breakfast. They accordingly went to No. 27, Rue des Boucheries, in company with two other persons, one of whom, a gentleman of the name of Couriol, was invited in consequence of his calling on the third party just as they were sitting down to breakfast. The company remained at table until nearly twelve o'clock, when they proceeded to the Palais Royal, and, after having taken coffee at the Rolonde du Caveau, separated.

Four days afterwards (on the 27th April), four horsemen, mounted on good, but evidently tired horses, were observed to ride out of Paris through the Barrière de Charenton, as if on a party of pleasure. They all wore long cloaks, as was then the fashion, and sabres hanging from their waists. One of the party was Couriol.

Between twelve and one o'clock the four horsemen arrived at the pretty village of Mougeron, on the road to Melun and Burgagne. One of the party had galloped forward to order dinner at the Hôtel de la Poste, kept by Sieur Evrard. After dinner they asked for pipes and tobacco, and two of them smoked. They paid their bill and went to the casino of the place, where they took four cups of coffee. Shortly afterwards they mounted their horses, and, following the road, shaded by beech trees, which leads from Mougeron to the forest of Lenart, they proceeded at a foot pace towards Lieursaint, a picturesque village in the midst of a grove.

They arrived at Lieursaint about three o'clock in the afternoon, and there made another long halt. The horse of one of the party had lost a shoe, and another of them had broken the chain of his spur by collision with a friend's horse. This one stopped at the beginning of the village, at the cottage of a woman named Chatelin, a lemonade-seller, and requested her to give him coffee and supply him with some coarse thread to mend the chain of his spur. This woman immediately complied with his double request, and, as the traveller was not very skilful in mending the chain, she called her servant, one Grossetête, who accordingly mended the chain, and assisted in putting the spur on the boot. The three other horsemen during this time had dismounted at one Champeaux's, an innkeeper, and took something to drink, while he conducted the horse and horseman to the village smith, a man named Motteau. When the horse was shod the four travellers went to the café of the woman Chatelin, where they played some games at billiards. At half-past seven o'clock, after taking a stirrup-cup with the innkeeper, to whose house they returned for their horses, they mounted and rode off towards Melun.

On going in, Champeaux saw on a table a sabre, which one of the travellers had forgotten to put in his belt. He wished his stable-boy to run after them, but they were already out of sight. It was not until an hour afterwards that the traveller to whom the weapon belonged, and who was the same who had mended his spur, returned at full gallop for it. He then drank a glass of brandy, and set off at full speed in the direction taken by his companions. At this moment the mail courier from Paris to Lyons arrived to change horses. It was then about half-past eight o'clock, and the night had been for some time dark. The courier, after having changed horses and taken a fresh postilion, set out to pass the long forest of Lenart. The mail at this period was a sort of post-chaise, with a large trunk behind containing the despatches. There was one place only open to the public, at the side of the courier. It was on that day occupied by a man about thirty years of age, who had that morning taken his place to Lyons in the name of Laborde, silk merchant.

The next morning the mail was found rifled, the courier dead in his seat, with one wound right through his heart and his head nearly cut off. The postilion was found lying in the road, also dead, his head cut open, his right hand divided, and his breast wounded in three places. The postilion's wounds were evidently inflicted by sabres, wielded by two persons. One horse only was discovered near the carriage. The mail had been robbed of seventy-five thousand livres in assignats, silver, and bank bills. The officers of justice in their researches immediately became aware of the fact that five persons had passed through the barrier of Rambouillet, proceeding to Paris, between four and five o'clock in the morning after the murder. The horse ridden by the postilion was found wandering about the Place Royale, and they ascertained that four horses, covered with foam and quite exhausted, had been brought about five o'clock in the morning to a man named Muiron, Rue des Fosses-Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, by two persons who had hired them the day before. These two persons were named Bernard and Couriol. Bernard was immediately arrested; Couriol escaped.

In the course of the inquiry it became evident that the criminals must have been five in number. A description was obtained of the four who had ridden from Paris and stopped at Mougeron and Lieursaint from the many persons with whom they had conversed on the road. A description was also obtained of the man who had taken his place with the courier under the name of Laborde from the person at the coach-office and from those who had seen him take his seat.

Couriol was traced to Château Thierry, where he lodged in the house of one Bruer, with whom, too, Guesno, the carrier of Douai, was also staying. The police proceeded there and arrested Couriol. In his possession was found a sum, in assignats, drafts, and money, equal to about a fifth of what had been taken from the mail. Guesno and Bruer were also taken into custody, but they proved alibis so distinctly that they were discharged as soon as they arrived in Paris.

The Bureau Central intrusted to one Daubenton, the Juge de Paix of the division of Pont-Neuf, and an officer of the judicial police, the preliminary investigations in this affair. This magistrate, after discharging Guesno, had told him to apply at his office next morning for the return of his papers, which had been seized at Château Thierry; at the same time he had ordered a police-officer, named Heudon,

to set out immediately for Mougeron and Lieursaint, and to bring back with him the witnesses, of whom he gave a list, so as to have them all together the next day at the central office ready to be examined.

Guesno, being desirous to obtain his papers as soon as possible, left home earlier than usual, and just before he reached the central office he met his friend, Lesurques. They conversed together, and Guesno, having explained the cause which took him to the office of the Juge de Paix, proposed that he should accompany him. They went to the office, then at the hotel afterwards occupied by the Prefect de Police, and, as citizen Daubenton had not yet arrived, they sat down in the ante-chamber, on purpose to wait his arrival and be more speedily released.

About ten o'clock the Juge de Paix, who had entered his room by a back door, was interrupted in his perusal of the documents, before examining the witnesses, by the officer

The Juge de Paix then ordered the other person pointed out by the two women to be introduced. This was Lesurques. He conversed with him and Guesno for a few minutes, requested them to walk into another room, where the papers would be brought to them, and privately told Heudon not to lose sight of them. When they had left the room the magistrate again asked the women if they persisted in their previous declarations. They did persist; their evidence was taken down in writing, and the two friends were immediately arrested.

From this time the proceedings were pressed on with great rapidity. Guesno and Lesurques, when confronted by the witnesses, were recognised by almost all. The woman Santon asserted that it was Lesurques who, after dinner at Mougeron, wished to pay in assignats, but that the tall, dark man (Couriol) paid in silver. Champeaux and his wife, the innkeepers at Lieursaint, recognised Lesurques

FOUR HORSEMEN, MOUNTED ON GOOD BUT EVIDENTLY TIRED HORSES, WERE OBSERVED TO RIDE OUT OF PARIS.

Heudón, who said, "Among the witnesses there are two, the woman Santon, servant of Evrard, the innkeeper at Mougeron, and the girl Grossetête, servant of the woman Chatelin, the lemonade-seller at Lieursaint, who declare in the most precise manner that two of the assassins are waiting in the ante-chamber. They say they could not be mistaken, as one of them waited at the dinner of the four travellers at Mougeron, and the other conversed with them at Lieursaint, and remained more than an hour in the room while they played at billiards."

The Juge de Paix, not believing this improbable statement, ordered the two women to be introduced separately. He then examined each of them, when they energetically repeated their statement, and said they could not be mistaken. He then, after warning the women that life and death depended on their answers, had Guesno brought into his room. "What," said the juge, "do you want here?" "I come," replied Guesno, "for my papers, which you promised to restore to me yesterday. I am accompanied by one of my friends from Douai, my native place. His name is Lesurques. We met on the road, and he is waiting for me in the other room."

as the man who had mended his spur and returned for his sabre. Lafolie, the stable-boy at Mougeron, and the woman Alfroy, a florist at Lieursaint, both recognised him. Laurent Charbaut, a labourer who had dined in the same room with the four horsemen, deposed that Lesurques was the one who had spurs affixed to his boots hussar fashion.

On the day of his arrest Lesurques wrote to a friend the following letter, which was intercepted and added to the legal documents: "My friend, since my arrival in Paris I have experienced nothing but troubles, but I did not expect the misfortune which now overwhelms me. Thou knowest me, and thou knowest whether I am capable of degrading myself by crime; yet the most frightful of crimes is imputed to me. I am accused of the murder of the courier to Lyons. Three men and two women, whom I know not, nor even their abode (for thou knowest that I have never left Paris), have had the assurance to declare that they remembered me, and that I was the first who rode up on horseback. Thou knowest that I have never mounted a horse since I arrived

in Paris. Thou wilt see of what vital import to me is such testimony as this, which tends to my judicial assassination. Assist me with thy memory, and try to remember where I was, and what persons I saw in Paris—I think it was the 7th or 8th of last month—so that I may confound these infamous calumniators, and punish them as the laws direct."

At the bottom of this letter were written the names of the persons he had seen on that day: Citizen Tixier, General Cambrai, Mademoiselle Eugenie, Citizen Hilaire, Ledru, his wife's hairdresser, the workmen engaged on his apartments, and the porter of the house. He concluded by saying, "Thou wilt oblige by seeing my wife often, and trying to console her."

Lesurques, Guesno, Couriol, Bernard, Riebard, and Bruer were tried before the criminal tribunal, the three first as authors or accomplices of the assassination and robbery, Bernard for having supplied the four horses, Riebard for having concealed Couriol and his mistress, Madeleine Breban, and for having concealed and divided all or part of the stolen property, Bruer for having received Couriol and Guesno into his house at Château Thierry. Guesno and Bruer produced evidence that completely cleared them.

Cried, "I am guilty!"

Lesurques called fifteen witnesses, all citizens exercising respectable professions and enjoying the esteem of the public. The first witness for the defence was Citizen Legrand, a countryman of Lesurques's, a wealthy silversmith and jeweller. He testified that, on the 8th, the very day the crime was committed, Lesurques passed one part of the morning with him. In addition, Aldenhof, a jeweller, Hilaire, Ledru, and Chausfer affirmed that they had dined with the prisoner on the same day at his relation's, Lesurques, in the Rue Montorquiel. They stated that after dinner they went to a café, and, after taking some liqueur, had seen him to his own house. The painter Beudart added that he meant to have dined with his friends, but that, being on duty as a National Guard, he could not arrive in time, yet that he had been at Lesurques's house the same evening in uniform, and had seen him retire to rest. In support of this deposition this witness produced his billet-de-gard, dated the 8th. The workmen who were employed upon the apartments Lesurques was about to occupy swore that they had seen him several times in the course of the 8th and 9th.

The jeweller Legrand, to corroborate his testimony, had stated that on the day, the 8th Floreal (27th April), he had before dinner made an exchange with Aldenhof, or, at any rate, that it was mentioned in his book that day. He proposed that his book should be brought. It was examined in court, and there it was discovered that the 9th had been clumsily scratched out and the 8th substituted. This at once changed the favourable impression that had been produced on behalf of the prisoner, and the witness was ordered into custody. He then lost all presence of mind, and owned that he was not certain of having seen Lesurques on that day, but that, feeling convinced of his innocence, he had altered his register to corroborate his own testimony.

The discussions and examinations were closed, and the jury had retired to deliberate. At this moment a woman, in a violent state of excitement, called aloud from the midst of the crowd in court for leave to speak to the president. She was, she said, urged by the voice of conscience to save the tribunal from committing a dreadful crime. On being placed before the judges she declared that Lesurques was innocent, that the witnesses had mistaken him for a man of the name of Dubosq, to whom he bore an extraordinary resemblance. This woman was Madeleine Breban, the mistress of Couriol and the confidant of his most secret thoughts. She now abandoned him and avowed her own guilt to save Lesurques.

Madeleine Breban's evidence was rejected, and the jury brought in their verdict, by which Couriol, Lesurques, and Bernard were condemned to death. Riebard was sentenced to twenty-four years' labour in irons; Guesno and Bruer were acquitted.

No sooner had sentence been pronounced than Lesurques, rising calmly and addressing his judges, said, "I am innocent of the crime imputed to me. Oh! citizens, if murder on the highway be atrocious, to execute an innocent man is not less a crime!" Couriol then rose, and exclaimed, "I am guilty—I own my crime—but Lesurques is innocent and Bernard did not participate in the assassination!" He repeated these words four times, and on returning to his prison wrote a letter to his judges full of anguish and repentance, in which was this passage: "I never knew Lesurques. My accomplices were Vidal, Rossi, Durochat, and Dubosq. The resemblance of Dubosq has deceived the witnesses."

Madeleine Breban presented herself after sentence had been pronounced to renew her declaration. Two parties attested that before the condemnation of the prisoners Madeleine had said to them that Lesurques had never had any connection with the guilty persons—that he was the victim of his fatal likeness to Dubosq. The declaration of Couriol caused some doubt in the minds of the judges. They immediately applied to the Directory for a reprieve, who, alarmed at the probability of an innocent man being executed, applied to the legislative assemblies, for all judicial means had been exhausted. The message of the Directory to the "Five Hundred" was urgent. It requested a reprieve and instructions on the subsequent steps to be taken. It concluded in these words: "Ought Lesurques to die on the scaffold because he resembles a criminal?"

The legislative body passed to the order of the day, considering that, as all legal forms had been fulfilled, a single case ought not to cause an infraction of forms previously settled, and that to annul on such grounds the sentence legally pronounced by a jury would subvert all ideas of justice and of equality before the law!

The right of pardon had been abolished. Lesurques was left without help or hope. He bore his fate with firmness and resignation. On the day of his death he wrote to his wife the following letter: "My dear friend, we cannot avoid our fate. I shall, at any rate, endure it with the courage which becomes a man. I send some locks of my hair; when my children are older, divide it with them. It is the only thing that I can leave them."

In a letter of adieu addressed to his friends he merely observed: "Truth has not been heard; I shall die the victim of mistake." He published in the newspapers the following letter to Dubosq, whose name had been revealed by Couriol: "Man, in whose place I am to die, be satisfied with the sacrifice of my life. If you be ever brought to justice, think of my three children, covered with shame, and of their mother's despair, and do not prolong the misfortunes of so fatal a resemblance."

On the 10th of March, 1797, Lesurques went to the place of execution dressed completely in white, as a symbol of his innocence, with his shirt turned over his shoulders. The day was Holy Thursday (old style). He expressed his regret at not having to die the next day, the anniversary of the Passion. On the way from prison to the place of execution, Couriol, who was seated in the cart beside him, cried, in a loud voice, addressing himself to the people: "I am guilty, but Lesurques is innocent!"

When he reached the scaffold, already red with the blood of Bernard, Lesurques gave himself up to the executioners, saying, "I pardon my judges, the witnesses, whose mistake has murdered me, and Legrand, who has not a little contributed to this judicial assassination. I die protesting my innocence."

Many of the jury afterwards expressed their regret at having given credit to the witnesses from Mougeron and Lieursaint, and Citizen Daubenton, the Juge de Paix who had arrested Lesurques and conducted the first proceedings, resolved to investigate the truth, which could only be satisfactorily effected through the arrest and trial of the four persons denounced by Couriol as his accomplices.

Two years elapsed without the conscientious magistrate being able, in spite of all his inquiries, to discover the slightest trace of the fugitives. At length, in examining the numerous warrants and registers of persons daily brought to his bureau, he discovered that Durochat, the individual whom Couriol had denounced as the one who had taken his place by the side of the courier, under the name of Laborde, had just been arrested for a robbery he had lately effected, and lodged in St. Pelagie. At the time of Lesurques's trial it had come out in evidence that several persons, amongst others an inspector of the post-mails, had preserved a perfect recollection of the pretended Laborde, having seen him when waiting for the mail.

Citizen Daubenton, by great exertion, secured the presence of the inspector in the court on the day of Durochat's trial. He was condemned to fourteen years' labour in chains, and as the gendarmes were conducting him to prison the inspector recognised the prisoner as the same person who had travelled in the mail towards Lyons, under the name of Laborde, on the day on which the courier was assassinated.

Durochat made but feeble denials, and was reconducted to the Conciergerie, where Citizen Daubenton had him immediately detained, under a charge arising out of the proceedings against Couriol. The next morning the magistrate, assisted by Citizen Masson, an officer of the criminal tribunal, took means for transferring the prisoner to the gaol at Melun, where he arrived the same evening. After being examined early the next morning, it was found necessary to transfer him to Versailles, where he was to be tried. The magistrate and officer set out, followed by two gendarmes, to convey the prisoner to Versailles. On arriving at a village near Grosbois, he asked for breakfast, for he had eaten nothing since the preceding evening. The escort, therefore, stopped at the first inn, and Durochat then asked to speak with the Juge de Paix alone. The juge, having sent away the two gendarmes and the officer Masson, though the latter made signs to him that it was dangerous to remain alone with such a consummate villain, ordered breakfast for himself and Durochat. A table was placed between them; the servant, acting under the orders of Masson, brought only one knife. Citizen Daubenton took it to open an egg, when Durochat, looking hard at him, said, "Monsieur le Juge, you are afraid!" "Of whom?" asked Daubenton. "Of me," replied Durochat; "you have armed yourself with a knife." The Juge de Paix presented the knife to him by the handle, saying, "There, cut me some bread, and tell me what you know about the assassination of the courier."

Durochat rose up from his seat, and, laying down the knife, which he had at first grasped menacingly, exclaimed, "You are a brave fellow, citizen. I am a lost man—my time's up—but you shall know all." He then related every particular of the murder, which completely agreed with the statements made by Couriol. He stated that Vidal had pro-

ATTACKED THE CARRIAGE AS THE POSTILION WAS SLACKENING.

jected the affair, and had communicated it to him at a restaurant in the Champs Elysées. The criminals were Couriol, Rossi, alias Beroldy, Vidal, himself, and Dubosq. Dubosq had forged for him the passport in the name of Laborde, by means of which he easily procured another for Lyons, to enable him to take his place in the mail. He had also lent the party 3,000 francs in assignats. Bernard had supplied four horses for Couriol, Rossi, Vidal, and Dubosq. They had attacked the carriage as the postilion was slackening his pace to ascend a little hill. It was he (Durochat) who had stabbed the courier at the instant that Rossi cut down the postilion with a sabre. He had then given up his horse to him (Durochat), and had returned to Paris on that of the postilion. As soon as they arrived there they all met at Dubosq's, Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, where they proceeded to divide the booty. Bernard, who had only provided the horses, was there, and claimed his share, and got it. "I have heard," he added, "that there was a fellow named Lesurques condemned for this business; but, to tell the truth, I never knew the fellow, either at the planning of the business or at its execution, or at the division of the spoil. After the crime I lodge with Vidal, Rue des Fontaines. I left there soon afterwards, on hearing of the arrest of Couriol. The porter at that house was named Perrier."

The confession of Durochat was taken down in writing and signed by him. The party then resumed their journey to Versailles, and on the prisoner's arrival there he renewed it before one of the judges of the tribunal. "The magistrate," says Citizen Daubenton, "present at this examination observed to Durochat that Lesurques had been sworn to as one of the party of four," and also "that he had silver spurs on his boots, which he had been seen to repair with thread, and that this spur had been found on the place where the mail had been attacked." Durochat replied, "It was Dubosq who had the silver spurs. The morning we divided the plunder I remember hearing that he had broken one of the chains of his spurs, that he had mended it where he dined, and lost it in the scuffle. I saw in his hand the other spur, which he said he was going to throw into the mixen." Durochat then described Dubosq, and added that on the day of the murder he wore a blonde wig.

Some days after the arrest of Durochat, Vidal, one of the other authors of the crime, was also arrested. Although all the witnesses swore to him as one of the party who had dined and played at billiards, he denied everything. Special proceedings were instituted against him, and he remained in the prison of La Seine.

Durochat was condemned to death and executed. He underwent his fate with perfect indifference. Vidal was shut up in the principal prison of Seine and Oise, where the prosecution commenced in Paris was carried on.

Towards the end of the year 8 (1799-1800), four years after the assassination of the courier, Dubosq, having been arrested for a robbery in the department of Allier, where he had retired under a false name, was recognised in the prison, brought to Paris, and then to Versailles, to be tried at the same time as Vidal before the criminal tribunal. It was discovered, on searching the registers, that while very young he had been condemned to the galleys for life for stealing plate from the Archbishop of Besançon. He had afterwards escaped at the time of the revolutionary disturbances. Arrested in Paris for a second robbery, he had been again condemned and had again escaped. Retaken at Rouen, he had once more succeeded in breaking loose, and, arrested at Lyons, he had a fourth time broken from prison. This last escape occurred a few weeks before the attack on the mail and double murder in the forest of Lenart. Like Vidal, however, he denied everything.

Dubosq and Vidal, being both confined in the prison of Versailles, planned an escape, which they soon executed. After having climbed over the first two walls, and reached the top of the outside one, they had only to jump down twenty-five feet into the street. Vidal tried first, and succeeded; Dubosq broke his leg in the attempt and was retaken. The Citizen Daubenton spared no pains to discover Vidal's retreat. He learned soon afterwards that he had been arrested at Lyons for new crimes. He was brought back to Versailles; but in the meantime Dubosq had recovered from his fracture, and found means to break out of prison. Vidal was tried alone, condemned, and executed.

At length, in the latter part of the year 9 (1800-1801), Dubosq was again arrested, and immediately brought before the criminal tribunal of Versailles. The president had ordered a blonde wig to be placed on his head before the witnesses were called in. "The Citizen Perault," says Daubenton, from whose account this narrative is written, "a member of the legislative assembly, and one of those who had seen the four cavaliers who had dined at Mougeron on the day of the murder of the courier, and who had recognised Lesurques as one of them, stated that there was a striking resemblance between Dubosq and Lesurques." The woman Alfroy, who had before sworn to Lesurques as one of the four, declared that she was mistaken in her evidence before the Tribunal de la Seine, and that she was now firmly convinced that it was not Lesurques but Dubosq that she had seen. To this evidence Dubosq replied by stubborn denials. It was proved that he was intimate with the guilty parties; indeed, he could not deny it, and the declarations of Couriol, Durochat, and Madeleine Breban had great weight against him.

He was unanimously condemned, and was executed 3rd Ventose, in the year 10 (22nd February, 1802).

At length the last of the accomplices denounced by Couriol and Durochat, otherwise Ferrari, or the Great Italian, whose real name was Beroldy, was discovered near Madrid, and given up at the request of the French Government. Having been tried and sentenced to death at Versailles, he testified the utmost repentance, and went to execution, receiving religious attentions from Monsieur de Grandpré. After the execution Monsieur de Grandpré stated to the president that he had been authorised by the criminal to confess the justice of his sentence. The same Monsieur de Grandpré deposited with M. Destrumeau, a notary at Versailles, a declaration written and signed by Beroldy, otherwise Rossi, which was not to be published until six months after his death. The following is the tenor of this document, which is given, with all the particulars of this extraordinary case, in the memoir written by M. Daubenton: "I declare that the man named Lesurques is innocent; but this declaration, which I give to my confessor, is not to be published until six months after my death."

Thus terminated this long judicial drama. Ferrari, otherwise Rossi, was the sixth executed as one of the authors or accomplices in the murder of the Lyons courier, besides Riebard, who was condemned to the galleys for having received the stolen property and for having concealed Couriol and afterwards assisted him to fly. Yet it was most distinctly proved in the course of the trials that there were only five murderers—the one who, under the name of Laborde, had taken his place beside the courier, and the four horsemen who rode on the horses hired by Bernard, dined at Mougeron, and took coffee and played at billiards at Lieursaint.

The widow and family of Lesurques, relying on these facts, and supported by the declarations of Couriol and Durochat, the confessions of Rossi and Vidal, and the retractions of the witnesses in Dubosq's trial, applied for a revision of the sentence so far as concerned Lesurques, in order to obtain a rehabilitation (a judicial declaration of his innocence and the restoration of his property) if he should be proved the victim of an awful judicial error.

The Citizen Daubenton devoted the latter part of his life and the greater portion of his fortune to the discovery of the truth. In the conclusion of his memoir he declared that, according to his conviction, there were sufficient grounds to induce the Government to order a revision of Lesurques's sentence. He concluded his statement by saying that "the Calases, the Servens, and all the others for whom the justice of our sovereigns had ordered a like revision, had none of them had such strong presumptions in their favour as the unhappy Lesurques." But the right of revision no longer existed in the French code. Under the Directory, the Consulate, and the Restoration, the applications of the widow and family of Lesurques were equally unsuccessful. All that the family could obtain in the two last years of the reign of the elder Bourbons was the restoration of part of the property sequestrated according to the law in force at the time of Lesurques's execution.

After the revolution of 1830 the Lesurques family again appealed to the Chambers. In the course of 1834 a report in favour of the claims of the family was made by a committee which sat upon their case. The matter was then sent back for the consideration of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance. After that step the question remained in abeyance. The widow of Lesurques died in October, 1842, forty-five years after his execution, and her claims had not been settled then. His eldest son fell fighting in the ranks of the French Army. Whether France ever rendered a tardy justice to the son and daughter who remained we cannot tell. Possibly, in the many changes of government, their rights were lost sight of, and they never received that acknowledgment and restitution which was their due. The fate of Joseph Lesurques stands as a warning to judges and juries alike when circumstantial evidence is the sole factor in determining the life or death of a fellow-creature.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Wanted for Seven Murders.

WHEN Mr. Montague Williams had finished his speech for the defence, a stranger approached him and whispered in the ear of the famous barrister, "Very ingenious, sir; but if you succeed in getting that woman off you will do her the worst turn anyone ever did her."

It transpired that the stranger was a member of the Lincoln police, and that he had instructions, in the event of a verdict of acquittal, to arrest the prisoner on no less than seven separate charges of murder by poison.

Barrett, 1867.

AT the trial of Michael Barrett and others for what was known as the Clerkenwell Explosion, it was ascertained that on one occasion after the perpetration of that terrible outrage some of the leading spirits engaged in the plot were outside a newspaper shop, which displayed a bill in the window referring to the "diabolical offence."

"Yes," said Nicholas English, as he gazed at the bill, "it was diabolical, and we will burn the whole of London yet, and that will be more diabolical!"

What She Did.

MR. JUSTICE ALLAN PARK was trying a case in which a little girl, aged ten, was a witness, and before taking her evidence he asked her several questions as to her knowledge of the Catechism, the Ten Commandments, etc., and receiving favourable answers, gave her some encouragement, and said he had just one more question to ask, which the Court and audience thought would make everything right.

"Just tell us, little girl, what you do before going to bed." The witness was silent; the question was repeated, and, after some further encouragement, and telling her not to be afraid, she at last said, amid breathless silence, "I put off my clothes and put on my night-cap."

The Energetic Magistrate.

MR. SAUNDERS WELCH, a great friend of Dr. Johnson, and who succeeded Henry Fielding as a Metropolitan magistrate, was one of the most energetic men who ever filled the magisterial bench, and, as was then the custom, did a great deal of constabulary as well as judicial work.

In the year 1768 he arrested a notorious highwayman named Dick Sharples, who was the terror of the green lanes of Marylebone.

Having received information from a private source that Sharples was hiding in a house in Rose Street, Long Acre, Mr. Welch hired the lightest hackney-coach he could find, and, there being no foot-pavements in those days, ordered the conveyance to be driven close up to the house. He then climbed upon the roof of the coach, raised the sash of the first-floor window, entered the room, and found the highwayman asleep in bed. He at once seized him, dragged him, naked, out of bed, and out of the window on to the roof of the coach, and, amidst the cheers of an immense crowd, drove him away to the police-office at Bow Street.

Saved by His Dog.

IN the year 1825 a Mr. Johnson was travelling on horseback from Manchester to Scotland. He was a jeweller's traveller, and carried with him a large quantity of unset diamonds, as well as various other valuable stones, pearls, rubies, etc. Four times a year he made this journey, stopping every night at some little public-house, and travelling all day, covering about thirty miles between sunrise and sunset. On the present occasion he was caught in a violent thunderstorm when about five miles from a small town in the North of England, where he had put up on previous journeys, and where he intended again seeking rest and refreshment on this particular night. The violence of the thunderstorm, however, caused him to alter his plans, and to determine to seek shelter at the first available hostelry. He spurred on his horse, and soon came to a small public-house on the road, and at once dismounted. On entering the house, he found only an old woman, who said, in reply to his query, that she could accommodate him with a bed and provide for the horse in a small shed, if he would assist her in giving him some hay, as there was no other person in the house. This was agreed to by Mr. Johnson, who, after taking a little refreshment, was shown by the old woman to his bedroom.

A large German boarhound, or Great Dane, which always accompanied him on his journeys, attempted to go up to the room along with him, but the old woman strongly objected to this, though Mr. Johnson firmly persisted in having him admitted.

The dog, on his entrance, began to growl, and was very unruly. His master in vain attempted to quieten him; he kept growling and looking and sniffing angrily under the bed, which induced Mr. Johnson to look there likewise; when, to his very great astonishment, he saw a man concealed at the farther end. On encouraging the dog, he sprang immediately at the man, whilst Mr. Johnson seized his pistols, and, presenting one at the man, who had a large knife in his hand and was struggling with the dog, swore he would instantly shoot him if he made further resistance.

The fellow then submitted to be bound, and acknowledged that it was his intention to murder and rob Mr. Johnson, which was thus providentially prevented by the wonderful sagacity of his faithful dog. Mr. Johnson, after properly securing his prisoner and fastening the door, went, accompanied by his dog, to the shed where his horse was stabled, and having mounted, he escaped without injury to the next town, where he gave the magistrate a full account of the horrible attempt. The culprit was duly arrested and transported for fifteen years for his villainy.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

V. B.—If you had taken our paper from the commencement you would have known that a full account of "Eugene Aram" was given in numbers 7 and 8. You might be able to get back numbers from our publisher.

LIVESEY.—There are four other crimes punishable by death known to the present English law. High treason, arson, piracy, and attempts to destroy public dockyards and arsenals within the Port of London. This is the second time this question has been answered.

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BILE BEANS

INDIGESTION & BILIOUSNESS.

"FROM childhood I have suffered, more or less, from Indigestion and Biliousness," said Miss Mary Roser (whose parents reside at 19, Manor Grove, Richmond), in the course of an interview with a reporter of the "Weekly Budget." "About seven years ago I had a severe attack, and for several weeks was a patient at the Richmond Hospital. This only relieved me slightly, and in time I again became a constant sufferer from severe indigestion and biliousness. I also had bad attacks of dizziness and weakness, so bad that more than once it has been fortunate that someone has been near me when I swooned. Seven months ago I was in a dreadfully weak state; I had severe pains across the chest and about the loins, and a horrible sensation of a need to vomit, yet never able to do so. I was tired and languid the whole time, had no energy, was very much depressed, and frequently and suddenly overcome with faintness. My colour was very bad, and the doctor who was attending me said I was suffering from anæmia. When the fainting fits were coming upon me my face would go very red, unnaturally so, and then change quickly to a dull, death-like whiteness. The doctor's medicines did me no good. I had become quite unable to continue in a situation, when, after reading about Bile Beans, I made up my mind to try them. I have not been ill in any way since I finished the first boxful. The effect they had was to put all my natural forces into proper order, and gradually they brought me to a state of perfect health. I am thoroughly well now, my colour is natural and healthy, I sleep well, eat well, and am bright and strong. Bile Beans have completely cured me, and I can never be too thankful for what they have accomplished.

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